

Building a Foundation on Sand: The Demise of Leaders Resulting from Toxic Followership

A Monograph

by

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2016

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188	
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Executive Service Directorate (0704-0188). Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 26-05-2016		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) July 2015 - May 2016	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Building a Foundation on Sand: The Demise of Leaders Resulting from Toxic Followership				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Adam K. Greene, US Army				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-2134				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The US Army tends to over-emphasize leader development, neglecting the integral role followers play in organizational decision-making. This reflects the assumption that good leaders are also good followers, but this assumption does not hold up under scrutiny. Often, friction between leaders and followers results in followers who develop toxic followership traits which cause them to undermine the leader and the organization. Effective leaders act as toxic followers when they subvert authority in this manner. The US Army seeks to develop leaders through education, experience, and training. This teaches individuals to amplify their strengths as leaders and to use these traits to achieve results, but this can contribute to neglect of the individual's skill as a follower. When this leads to toxic followership, that individual ultimately loses effectiveness as a leader as well. History reveals this trend even at the highest levels, in which the President relieves a general officer. While many critics cite failures in leadership as the cause, the relief often results from toxic followership. This provides a warning for US Army leader development. When individuals build their leadership foundation on the sand, they will likely fail in the future.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Leadership, Leader Development, Followership, Toxic Followers, Prototype Theory, Mission Command, Operational Art, McClellan, Johnston, MacArthur, Powell,					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 87	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)

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Monograph Approval Page

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Monograph Title: Building a Foundation on Sand: The Demise of Leaders Resulting from Toxic Followership

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Abstract

Building a Foundation on Sand: The Demise of Leaders Resulting from Toxic Followership, by MAJ Adam K. Greene, US Army, 87 pages.

The US Army tends to over-emphasize leader development, neglecting the integral role followers play in organizational decision-making. This reflects the assumption that good leaders are also good followers, but this assumption does not hold up under scrutiny. Often, friction between leaders and followers results in followers who develop toxic followership traits, which cause them to undermine the leader and the organization. Effective leaders act as toxic followers when they subvert authority in this manner. The US Army seeks to develop leaders through education, experience, and training. This teaches individuals to amplify their strengths as leaders and to use these traits to achieve results, but this can contribute to neglect of the individual's skill as a follower. When this leads to toxic followership, that individual ultimately loses effectiveness as a leader as well. History reveals this trend even at the highest levels, in which the President relieves a general officer. While many critics cite failures in leadership as the cause, the relief often results from toxic followership. This provides a warning for US Army leader development. When individuals build their leadership foundation on the sand, they will likely fail in the future.

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Acknowledgments

I first wrote about this topic in March 2015, in a short essay after reflecting on the relationship between leaders and followers. At the time, I did not consider pursuing the topic much further until the encouragement of two of my mentors. I must first thank Mr. Dwayne Wagner and Dr. Tom Ward of the US Army Command and Staff School who urged me to adopt the idea of toxic followership in this SAMS monograph. I must thank my monograph director, Dr. Mark T. Calhoun. Our dynamic exchange of ideas over the last year helped me refine my thinking and my approach to developing historical case studies. We exchanged over a hundred emails, and met several times to discuss my progress. I must also thank my seminar leader, LtCol Randall Hoffman, USMC, and my classmates who continued to challenge my ideas and strengthen my argument. Most importantly, I am forever thankful to my wife Mariana, and our two children, Angela and Max. Their patience and support helped me work through this journey.

Acronyms

ALDS	Army Leader Development Strategy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces in Japan
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
NSC	National Security Council
UN	United Nations
USMA	United States Military Academy

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Introduction

He who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander.

—Aristotle

Background

Many people in modern American society view the terms manager and follower in a very negative light. Corporations use terms like associate, team-member, and representative to denote employees whose positions require minimal leadership or managerial responsibilities.

Conversely, the US Army's mission command philosophy labels commander's subordinates as leaders rather than some derivative of follower. The term manager often carries the connotation of an individual who directs subordinates according to a set of specific operating procedures with little deviation outside of established guidelines. When organizations and societies romanticize leadership, individuals in followership roles tend to focus more energy on obtaining leadership positions while sacrificing skill development as a subordinate. Over-emphasizing leadership creates an imbalance between leaders and followers because of a tendency to assume that good leaders are also good followers, but these followers may not have effectively developed their skills as a subordinate as they gain positions of increased responsibility.¹

The US Army applies significant intellectual energy to the development of leaders through education, experience, and training. Leader development is an arduous process that, if ill performed, can have grave consequences for unprepared leaders as they progress in rank. Among other methods, the Army addresses leader development through mission command philosophy,

¹ Robert G. Lord, and Karen J. Maher, *Leadership and Information Processing: Linking Perceptions and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 179; Barbara Kellerman, *The End of Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012), xiii-xxii; Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1.

the Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS), the Army Human Dimension Strategy, and a host of doctrinal publications. Two unifying themes across these publications are mission command philosophy and the growing complexity of the strategic environment and the challenges incurred by military leaders at all levels with this growing uncertainty. The US Army's preferred leadership style is mission command because commanders use the philosophy to foster an environment where subordinates maintain the flexibility to exercise disciplined initiative to solve complex and complicated problems. Mission command harnesses the ingenuity of subordinates. The antithesis of mission command is detailed command where leaders retain greater control of organizational decisions. Detailed command may work when an organization encounters a structured and well-defined problem, but the utility of detailed command quickly ends with less structured and more vague problems. Using mission command throughout the Army facilitates leaders practicing operational art.²

Current US joint doctrine defines operational art as the “use of creative thinking by commanders and staffs to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces.”³ The goal of operational art is to achieve strategic objectives of combatant commanders by effective employment of tactical units. Two centuries ago, the military possessed far fewer intermediate commands between the strategic and tactical levels, but present-day operations contains the challenge of decentralized operations with numerous military echelons between squads and strategic leaders. Exercising mission command facilitates effective

² Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1; Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), I-13.

³ Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), xii.

employment of operational art because subordinate leaders use disciplined initiative to achieve objectives. Conversely, toxicity breaks down mission command and with it, operational art.⁴

Leader toxicity, a highly charged issue of increased concern in today's complex and uncertain world, has emerged as a common explanation for poor unit performance. Toxic leaders, through poor leadership practices, cause a deterioration of unit quality. As a result, the Army uses various methods such as 360-degree surveys to identify, target, and stifle toxic leadership. If toxic leaders continue to remain malignant, the promotion and separation processes are designed to expel these leaders from the Army.⁵

In the last century, the United States experienced a culture shift in the way that leaders and followers interact. Before the 1950s, leadership development in the United States focused on giving leaders the functional knowledge and skills required to make decisions in their particular field or industry. Organizations trained leaders in what decisions to make rather than how they should interact with subordinates. In the 1970s, leadership experts like Warren Bennis began to identify and evaluate the difference between managers and leaders. In the 1980s, scholars researched social stratifications in organizations such as how social categories affect hiring, compensation, and social interaction. In the 1990s, international competition drove the requirement for employee involvement resulting in growing subordinate influence in the conduct of organizational leadership. The leadership trend through the twentieth century suggests a shift in the balance of organizational power towards subordinates. Present day businesses and organizations demonstrate a growing trend of flattened organizational structures. For example, W.

⁴ Joint Publication (JP) 3-31, *Command and Control for Joint Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), IV-8–VI-9.

⁵ Bill Ackerly, "Army Implements New Self-Awareness Program for Commanders," US Army Mission Command Center of Excellence, September 26, 2014, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.army.mil/article/134580>.

L. Gore and Associates, Inc., manufacture of Gore-Tex products contains “no traditional organizational charts, no chains of command, nor predetermined channels of communication.” This culture shift does not indicate that all US organizations will resemble Gore, but it does indicate an evolution in the interaction between subordinates and superiors that leadership development programs must account for to successfully groom future leaders.⁶

The US Army must maintain some specific aspects of its current hierarchical structure because of the necessity in providing for the national defense, but as a conservative subculture of the US population, the military must embrace domestic cultural changes to retain the trust of the American people. Renowned military sociologist Charles Moskos wrote, “Changes in military organization reflect, as they sometimes affect, large-scale social changes in the broader society.” For example, the military largely mirrored American society’s integration of minority ethnicities, integration of women, tolerance of various sexual orientations, and permissiveness of conscientious objection. Some may argue that military culture exists independently from society, but military personnel maintain close ties with civilian friends and relatives, and remain in the public eye, making them a more conservative extension of American society rather an independent culture.⁷

⁶ Barbara Kellerman, *The End of Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012), 25-29; Pamela S. Tolbert and Richard H. Hall, *Organizations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes*, 10th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009), 10; Gene Dixon, “Getting Together,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008); “Our Culture,” W. L. Gore and Associates, Inc., accessed September 27, 2015, [http:// www.gore.com/en_xx/aboutus/culture/index.html](http://www.gore.com/en_xx/aboutus/culture/index.html), (quote).

⁷ Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office: 2012), 2-3; quote by Charles C. Moskos, “Toward a Postmodern Military: The United States as a Paradigm,” in *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War*, ed. Charles Moskos, John Williams, and David Segal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 14-15; Volker C. Franke, “Generation X and the Military: A Comparison of Attitudes and Values between West Point Cadets and College Students,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, vol 29 (Summer 2001), 92-97.

As part of the ongoing culture shift where civilian organizations are often flattening their structure, the US Army implements methods that resemble this phenomenon. Battalion and brigade commanders now must initiate a commander's 360-degree survey (CDR360) where superiors, subordinates, and peers evaluate the commander, and the commander's supervisor receives a copy of the results to counsel and coach the commander. Programs like CDR360 indicate a similar flattening of military culture. Followers, both civilian and military, possess greater influence over the organization, and subordinates need to possess greater understanding of leader-follower interactions.⁸

Purpose / Significance

Official US Army publications acknowledge that effective leaders must also be effective followers. However, the US Army doctrine and education system focuses almost exclusively on leadership development, which reveals an underlying assumption that good leaders already are good followers. The Army's emphasis on developing leadership attributes could cause gaps to form in US Army leadership doctrine and education, leading to a force made up of personnel who are much better leaders than followers. The first potential gap involves personnel failing to develop effective followership traits before becoming a leader. The danger manifests when they appear as great leaders but they create an internal divide as a poor follower who undermines the chain of command. The second potential gap involves leaders becoming toxic followers as they mature without the benefit of ongoing followership development. This could cause their leadership attributes to progress, but their followership traits to remain stagnant. This potential gap is analogous to the Icarus Paradox in which leaders develop a sense of infallibility as they

⁸ Bill Ackerly, "Army Implements New Self-Awareness Program for Commanders," US Army Mission Command Center of Excellence, September 26, 2014, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.army.mil/article/134580>.

rise through the ranks. Leaders of organizations that contain toxic followers assume risk in exercising mission command that could potentially lead to a breakdown of operational art.⁹

Mission command philosophy capitalizes on every individual's capabilities by allowing for disciplined initiative during decentralized operations. Under mission command, leaders at all levels are able to focus their attention on the most necessary decisions allowing their subordinates to operate within the commander's intent rather than prescribing specific actions. Trust is the lynchpin of mission command because leaders will grant relative autonomy to trusted subordinates. Effective commanders of land forces use mission command to link ends, ways, and means as part of operational art to achieve strategic objectives. In some instances, subordinate toxicity interferes with and unravels mission command and operational art because follower actions work against the commander's intent. The trusted subordinate who overtly disagrees with the commander's intent may create a rift in the unit, which breaks down the trust that is vital to mission command. After the rift forms, units may become apathetic, leaders may have to exercise direct command, and in extreme cases, subordinates may erroneously label the leader as toxic perpetuating a breakdown of mission command and, ultimately, operational art.¹⁰

Problem Statement

In the United States, followers possess increasingly greater influence in the leader-follower relationship, but US Army leader and subordinate development remains focused on leaders rather than followers. As the US Army recruits from society with its growing follower

⁹ Paul Berg, "The Importance of Teaching Followership in Professional Military Education," *Military Review* (September-October 2014): 66.

¹⁰ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1; Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), xix, III-1—III-46; Joint Publication (JP) 3-31, *Command and Control for Joint Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014); III-3—III-5.

power principles, a larger number of service members will share these opinions. Since elected civilians exercise overall control of the US Army, the leader-follower culture shift is likely to occur from both a policy and personnel perspective even if the structure remains the same. David Collinson, a founding co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *Leadership* wrote, “the current interest in distributed leadership and exemplary followership suggests that the traditional dichotomous identities of leader and follower are increasingly ambiguous and blurred.”¹¹ The US Army still requires adherence to some system of formal hierarchy because leaders need the positional authority to make immediate decisions without follower input, such as in times of heated battle, but the Army needs to account for the change in individual beliefs, values, and norms. The problem is that the nature of leaders and followers has changed, and the US Army needs to evaluate its approach to leadership development by understanding the changing aspects of followership.

Followership Theory

Toxic followers are individuals whose actions or statements undermine superiors, and sometimes in doing so, damage organizational climate and cohesion. Toxic followership does not include healthy dissent. Renowned leadership expert Warren Bennis wrote, “The greater the initial disagreement among group members, the more accurate the results.”¹² Healthy discourse between subordinates and leaders benefits an organization. The problem arises when subordinates who disagree with superiors attempt to unite other individuals against the leader. Additionally,

¹¹David Collinson, “Conformist, Resistant, and Disguised Selves: A Post-Structuralist Approach to Identity and Workplace Followership,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 323.

¹² Warren Bennis, *Managing the Dream: Reflection on Leadership and Change* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 270.

toxic followership does not include illegal or unethical situations because subordinates have the moral obligation to report such behavior.

Three followership models assist defining and identifying toxic followership. The first two models demonstrate the nature of followers that may have a toxic attitude. The third model demonstrates the characteristics that help identify toxic followership. Ira Chaleff developed the first model as depicted in figure one. He developed this qualitative model when he studied followers who were willing to challenge their superiors, which he labeled “courageous followers.” The two components of Chaleff’s model address a follower’s interaction with authority regarding how much the subordinate is willing to challenge and how supportive they are of their superiors.¹³

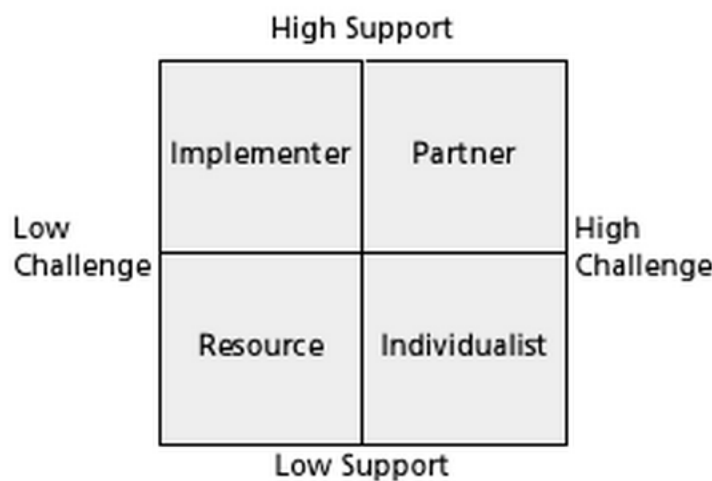


Figure 1. Chaleff Followership Styles

Source: Ira Chaleff, “Creating New Ways of Following,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75.

¹³ Ira Chaleff, “Creating New Ways of Following,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008).

In Chaleff's model, the partner is the individual that will challenge the supervisor, but will support the decision made. The implementer will complete tasks as expected without challenging authority, and leaders will often label the implementer as the loyal subordinate. Leaders tend to value implementers more than other types of followers because of the implementer's infallibility, but in doing so the leader risks groupthink due to implementers' limited skepticism. The resource individual is the one who achieves minimum standards to maintain the status quo. The individualist follower tends to be the one labeled as cynical or pessimist. Chaleff wrote that individualists "will speak up when others are silent, but voice is marginalized, as it is too chronically contrarian." One style is not necessarily better than another is because a balanced team will contain a mix of all four of Chaleff's styles. The individualist may be a source of frustration for leadership, but the individualist also possesses the most likely traits to exhibit followership toxicity, undermining authority—even if unintentionally. Robert Kelley created a second followership model with a mixed methods approach similar to Chaleff's model.¹⁴

Kelley first introduced this model in his *Harvard Business Review* article "In Praise of Followers." He later refined the model as depicted in figure two. Kelley based the model on two dimensions of individual attitudes towards authority rather than observed actions towards authority. The first dimension is the followers' ability to think critically in the work environment. The second dimension is the activeness of the follower such as the ability to take initiative. As seen in appendix one, individuals answer a questionnaire that separates the respondents based on

¹⁴ Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 74 (quote).

their followership style. These first two models assist in identifying the likelihood that an individual follower will display toxic behavior.¹⁵

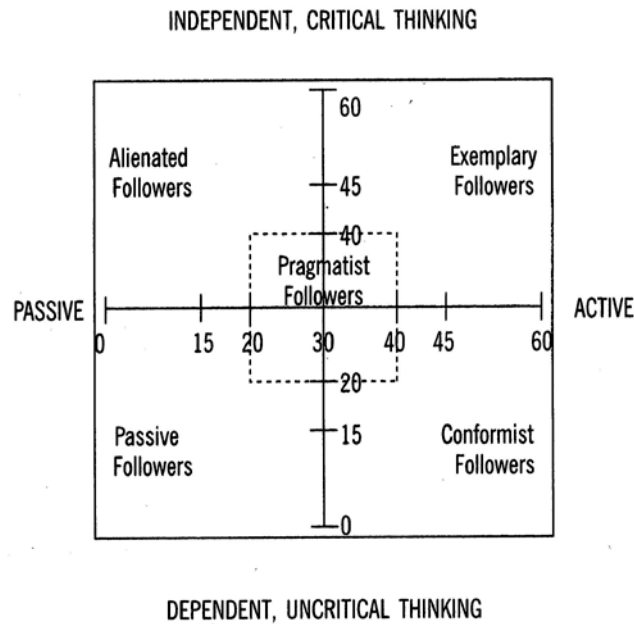


Figure 2. Kelley Followership Styles

Source: Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97. Copyright © 1989 - 2015 by Robert E. Kelley. All rights reserved. Cannot be used without express written permission.

In Kelley's model, exemplary followers, also known as star followers, are those who take initiative, accept responsibility for their actions, and provide constructive feedback to superiors, but accept their leaders' decisions and remain loyal to the organization. The exemplary follower

¹⁵ Robert E. Kelley, "In Praise of Followers," *Harvard Business Review*, November 1988, accessed August 12, 2015, <https://hbr.org/1988/11/in-praise-of-followers>; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership: How to Create Leaders People Want to Follow and Followers Who Lead Themselves* (New York: Doubleday Currency, 1992), 93-118; Robert E. Kelley, "Rethinking Followership," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008).

is similar to Chaleff's partner. The conformist follower, while dependable and capable of displaying initiative, lacks the capacity for independent thought. Kelley observed that conformists often possess significant pride in their work as key individuals in mission accomplishment, but they do not intellectually participate in the decision making process. The passive follower relies on both direction and motivation from their leaders. The pragmatic follower assesses which style to use in a particular situation, and then acts on it. Finally, alienated followers think critically, but fail to act in a constructive manner. Kelley described them as "capable but cynical," noting "alienated followers sarcastically criticize the leader's efforts, frequently hold back their own effort, or sink gradually into disgruntled acquiescence." Like the Chaleff model, an organization will benefit from a balance of these five followership styles. The two styles of followership most likely to yield to toxicity are Chaleff's individualist and Kelley's alienated followers. These two follower types share a simultaneous sense of arrogance and cynicism. Kelley wrote that alienated followers are "hurt or angry, wanting to punish someone for it. Any emotional energy is channeled into fighting against those parts of the present organization that they dislike rather than toward their work or a desired future." Although any type of follower may become toxic, leaders can identify subordinates at greatest risk by taking note of these characteristics.¹⁶

The Kelly and Chaleff models focus on follower attitudes and follower relationships with superiors. Roger Adair developed the 4-D followership model, which focuses on the interaction between the follower and the work environment, acknowledging that individual attitudes may sometimes have more to do with the situation than personal interaction with superiors. Based on this perspective, the 4-D model focuses on an individual's productivity, job satisfaction, and

¹⁶ Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership: How to Create Leaders People Want to Follow and Followers Who Lead Themselves* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 100 (quotes), 93-188.

turnover (the frequency at which an individual seeks a change in position). The active military's frequent reassignments and time-driven promotion system make turnover naturally high, but in the context of the 4-D model, military turnover concerns personnel who desire a different position for purposes other than natural career progression.¹⁷

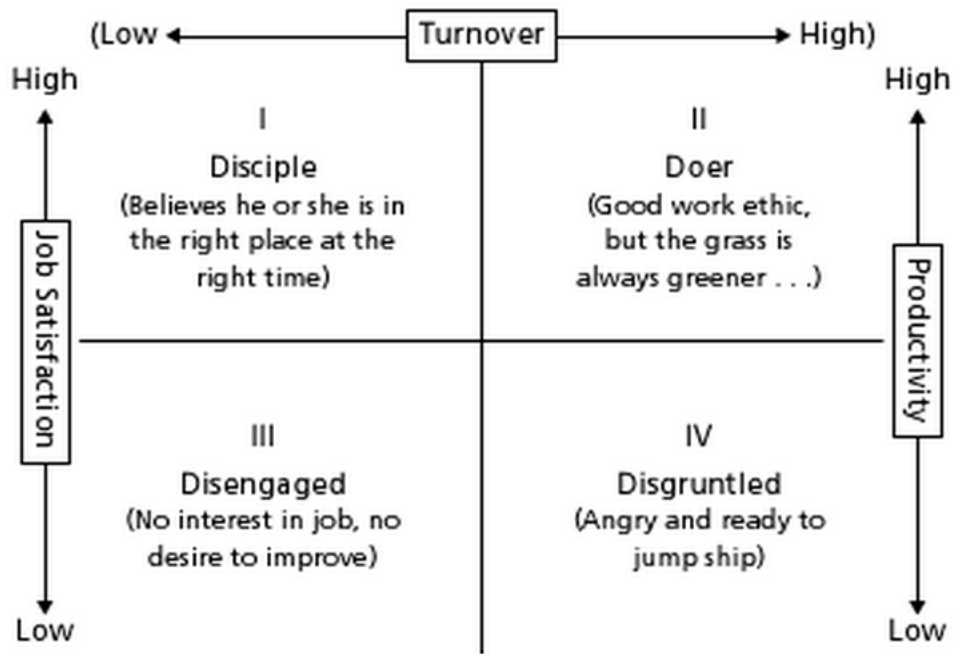


Figure 3. The 4-D Followership Model

Source: Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

Adair provided a method that makes it easier to observe and evaluate individuals over time. As described in the model, individuals whose actions fall into quadrants I or II perform well in their positions due to high job satisfaction. Those who exist in quadrants III or IV experience

¹⁷ Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008).

conditions that could lead them to exhibit follower toxicity. Analyzing individuals using these three models and comparing them to the concept of toxic followership will provide a more complete understanding of the nature of toxic followers and the propensity of various styles to exhibit toxicity.

US Army leadership doctrine “establishes and describes the leader attributes and core leader competencies that facilitate focused feedback, education, training, and development across all leadership levels.” The doctrine also recommends that all leaders include leadership theory as part of their individual self-development program. However, the doctrine does not identify psychological and sociological theories related to leadership. The absence of leadership theory in doctrine means that it neglects the ideas of social psychologists like Michael Hogg who has claimed, “although some broad personality attributes tend to be associated with effective leadership (e.g. extraversion/surgency, intellect/openness to experience, and conscientiousness), personality alone is rarely sufficient [to explain effective leadership].” This gap in theory allows for anomalies in which a leader will fail despite possessing the attributes and core competencies prescribed by current doctrine. Analyzing leadership through the lens of social psychology enables the identification of specific gaps in leader attributes that doctrine overlooks.¹⁸

In human information processing, people possess three types of short-term memory ranging from 300 milliseconds to about 20 seconds. The first two types—very short-term iconic memory and conceptual memory—serve as automatic filters during information processing. In these cases, information stored in long-term memory enables the filtering process. This allows the brain to make automatic decisions without having to develop a logical conclusion for the event. For example, over time, long-term memory stores data regarding the interaction of shadows in

¹⁸ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), v (first quote); Michael A. Hogg, “Social Psychology of Leadership,” in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 728 (second quote).

three-dimensional space. The human eye, relying on very short-term memory, automatically determines the spatial orientation between the individual and other objects in the field of vision emitting a shadow by using information stored in long-term memory. In social interaction, similar information processing occurs in which the mind filters information to make a subconscious decision based on long-term memory before the individual applies logic and reason. This process plays a key role in leader categorization theory, also known as prototype theory.¹⁹

Prototype theory describes prototyping as a process in which individuals apply abstract characterizations of themselves and others to serve as a foundation for social interaction. For example, a soldier's rank, occupational specialty, education level, professional certifications, unit, and peers all contribute to that soldier's social identity. One would not expect two individuals possessing conflicting prototypes to have an amicable relationship. When leader and collective subordinate prototypes do not align, a significant social conflict can occur between the leader and the followers regardless of the leader's strong adherence to positive leadership attributes and core competencies.²⁰

Often, leaders whose prototypes misalign with those of their subordinates must spend time and energy to earn the respect that would arise naturally in prototypical relationships with subordinates. In fast paced environments, this may disrupt operations. In extreme cases, the leader may never gain prototypical respect from subordinates, resulting in a toxic relationship that continues throughout the duration of the leader's tenure. As the relationship continues,

¹⁹ Robert G. Lord, and Karen J. Maher, *Leadership and Information Processing: Linking Perceptions and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 13-26; Daniel Kersten, Pascal Mamassian, and David C. Knill, "Moving Cast Shadows Induce Apparent Motion in Depth," *Perception* 26, no. 2 (February 1997): 171-92, accessed April 5, 2016, http://www.cvs.rochester.edu/knill_lab/papers/17_shadows_Kersten-etal-97.pdf.

²⁰ Michael A. Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 724-28.

subordinates are more likely to discredit their leader because of personality friction rather than the leader's effectiveness. In this situation, since leaders take responsibility for the effectiveness of the unit, the leader will likely suffer from poor performance evaluations, negative 360-degree surveys, or even written counseling despite the fact that the problem might stem not from that leader's performance, but from prototype differences. One type of toxic follower includes subordinates that seek to discredit their leader in this manner.²¹

Prototype conflicts can also originate from the leader. Leaders will also seek to align themselves with others of similar prototypes. In units with mixed prototypes, the leader may show favoritism, whether perceived or actual, towards specific subordinate leaders resulting in alienating un-favored subordinates. This favoritism also establishes fertile conditions for toxic followership. When leaders select subordinates for key positions or some other form of recognition, they tend to pick prototypically similar individuals. This can create a divide between those subordinates selected as members of the leader's inner circle of trusted confidants and other subordinates left as outsiders, prevented from penetrating the inner circle. Paradoxically, as Michael Hogg has explained, when leader and subordinate prototypes align, subordinates are more willing to allow the leader to "diverge from group norms and be less conformist than non- or less prototypical leaders." As the examples above illustrate, social psychology—especially prototype theory—provides methods for analyzing leader-follower relationships that complement those found in military doctrine.²²

These followership models and theories serve as valuable tools to evaluate follower toxicity. Prototype and organizational theory provide insight to basic actions of followers. Followership models identify patterns in behavior consistent with toxicity. Researchers can

²¹ Michael A. Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 724-28.

²² Hogg, 725 (quote), 724-28.

identify positive and negative followership trends by incorporating the models and theories together instead of focusing on actions or attributes alone. An alienated and individualist follower who differs prototypically from a superior will often exhibit toxicity and blame the leader for this behavior, even if otherwise high performing. Analysis of specific case studies using the models and theories as tools yields a better understanding of toxic followership.

Limitations and Delimitations

Toxic followership is not a universally accepted term or concept as described. Followership is an emerging field of study, but toxic followership remains ill defined. Authors that use the term typically refer to followers who support toxic leaders. However, these followers are part of the toxic leadership phenomenon. Humans possess an innate desire for a sense of security, which they can satisfy by supporting a toxic leader, because this reduces the risk of retribution against the follower. As described above, toxic followers generally use individualist (figure one) or alienated (figure two) follower styles. Subordinates who follow toxic leaders generally use the conformist followership style (figure two). As Robert Kelley observed, “domineering leaders who seek power over others tend to encourage conformist behavior.”²³

Contemporary cases of potential toxic or exemplar followers are problematic because recent cases reveal limited information regarding the situation, and the cases often generate emotional reaction to the information rather than objective evaluation. This study does not include such cases. Similarly, cases before the civil war are less applicable because of the degree to which the nature of leadership differed from more recent leadership styles. Additionally, the analysis that follows relies on research focused specifically on the relationships between American military and political leadership to prevent accidental cross-cultural gaps in analysis.

²³ Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership: How to Create Leaders People Want to Follow and Followers Who Lead Themselves* (New York: Doubleday Currency, 1992), 110.

Methodology

Case studies include four military leaders whose roles as a follower directly influenced mission command and operational art. Three cases focus on toxic followers contrasted with one case of an exemplary follower. A review of current understandings of toxicity and its recent evolution establish a foundation for further analysis. Using Robert Kelley's followership questionnaire (appendix one), characteristics from all three followership models, concepts from followership theory, and evidence from each case study will determine individual followership styles in accordance with figures one, two, and three. Any follower may exhibit toxic characteristics, but the alienated or individualistic follower is more likely to possess toxic characteristics.

To supplement the analysis of followership styles, the case studies include assessment of individuals based on the "undesirable behaviors" identified in US Army leadership doctrine. Additionally, the studies provide analysis of the individuals under study in accordance with the six US Army mission command principles. Synthesis of these methods establishes correlation between toxic followership and leadership as employed in the cases, bolstering the validity of the analysis in proving the hypothesis. The conclusion includes additional areas for study regarding toxic followership and recommendations for changes to US Army leadership doctrine and professional military education instruction. Ideally, this will lead to improvements in both leadership and followership development, assisting the US Army to win in a complex world.²⁴

Toxic followership occurs when certain individuals manifest behaviors that cause the breakdown of healthy discourse in an organization. Toxic followers often believe they possess the best solution and have difficulty following orders when their views and those of their superiors

²⁴ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 7-2; Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-1.

misalign. Toxic followers publicly disapprove of, and sometimes even seek to undermine leader decisions. The residual effect is a breakdown in mission command, operational art, and possible mission failure. In extreme cases, toxic followership causes the leader's demise when observers outside the organization attribute failure to the leader even though toxic followers created the situation.

George B. McClellan

Introduction

Major General George B. McClellan was the first commander of the Army of the Potomac, a key military force for the Union Army that was responsible for the defense of Washington, DC and the destruction of Confederate forces in northern Virginia. Late at night on November 7, 1862, President Lincoln relieved Major General George B. McClellan for failing to attack, pursue, and destroy Confederate forces. McClellan's firing occurred after a lengthy tumultuous relationship with Lincoln. Nearly a year prior to McClellan's relief, Lincoln opened a meeting with McClellan's division commanders and cabinet members with "if General McClellan [does] not want to use the army, [I] would like to borrow it." After his dismissal, McClellan would never again command a military unit.²⁵

Despite his rancor, Lincoln ensured that McClellan's relief occurred in a quiet, low-key manner. One of McClellan's subordinates, Major General Ambrose Burnside—selected by Lincoln to replace McClellan—issued the written order signed by the President. Upon hearing of the relief, the majority of Washington politicians indicated that they thought it came months too

²⁵ John C. Waugh, "Sacked," in *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 1-59; Chester G. Hearn, *Lincoln, the Cabinet, and The Generals* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 96 (quote).

late. However, the majority of McClellan's soldiers expressed surprise. Instead of departing the headquarters quietly in the middle of the night, McClellan wrote a letter to his soldiers and toured all of his units as a hero, rather than a military failure. McClellan was well aware of his popularity, and he left command in this manner to garner support for his successor and avert a coup d'état by his men.²⁶

After returning home, McClellan ran as the Democratic nominee against Lincoln in the 1864 general election, and later served as the Governor of New Jersey. Ironically, McClellan never behaved as a politician and did not campaign. He won both the presidential nomination and the gubernatorial race without seeking election. He accepted the results and served diligently, but others campaigned on his behalf and he won those elections generally as a write-in candidate. McClellan's military farewell tour and the manner in which he won those two elections demonstrated the divide between those who felt he would not win the war and those who saw him as a great leader and American hero.²⁷

Most historical accounts criticize McClellan, highlighting his failures as a senior Union general. Many historians acknowledge that McClellan was an effective manager, motivator, and team builder, but the literature does not reveal why a man of such great intellect and many talents failed to make an effective field general. Explanations range from poor leadership to arrogance and even paranoia. Conversely, the famous Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke claimed that McClellan's methods would have ended the war two years earlier, but McClellan did not have the necessary support from the government. Regardless of McClellan's talents, he openly

²⁶ Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 54-59; John C. Waugh, "Sacked," in *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

²⁷ John C. Waugh, "The Unpolitical Politician," in *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

criticized the president and his policies. McClellan believed Lincoln's directives were too risky and would lead to the slaughter of the Army. Lincoln on the other hand accused McClellan of failing to gain and maintain the initiative because he lacked an aggressive spirit, thus prolonging the war. McClellan and Lincoln's relationship became so toxic that Burnside, a friend to both men, had to serve as the unofficial messenger between the two. Ultimately, Lincoln fired McClellan not just because of failed leadership, but also because of toxic followership.²⁸

Prototypical Differences, Toxicity, and Civil War Relationships.

George McClellan boasted a white-collar upbringing with an educated and sophisticated pedigree. His father was an ophthalmologist with degrees from Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, and later was one of the founders of Jefferson Medical College (now Sidney Kimmel Medical College at the Thomas Jefferson University). McClellan possessed superior intellect by any standards. By the age of eleven, he conversed in Latin and French. At the age of thirteen, he enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania. At fifteen, he entered the United States Military Academy (USMA) in West Point, New York. McClellan graduated second in his class from USMA, far outperforming fellow classmates including future famous Confederate generals Stonewall Jackson and George Pickett. Furthermore, class rank was based merely on academic averages. According to USMA faculty members and his peers, McClellan was the total package officer being a far more capable officer than any of his classmates. In addition to intellect, he was athletic, amicable, modest, and creative. Upon graduation, he began his military service as an engineer officer, a career field reserved for the best officers due to the immense skill required to

²⁸ George T. Curtis, *McClellan's Last Service to the Republic* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886), 126; Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 6-56; "About Us," Sidney Kimmel Medical College, accessed January 26, 2016, <http://www.jefferson.edu/university/skmc/about.html>.

perform engineering duties such as surveying. No one doubted that McClellan was destined for greatness.²⁹

After graduation, he proved to be an effective combat leader in the Mexican-American War. Major General Winfield Scott, the commander of the expedition, gave McClellan two battlefield promotions for his actions. As a testament to McClellan's character, he turned down a third promotion that Scott offered him later in the campaign. McClellan did not accept the award because he did not participate in the key battle during that phase of the campaign. McClellan lived up to his reputation forged at USMA, and he gave the Army's senior leaders confidence that he was one of the most capable, if not the most capable officer in the Army. While fighting in Mexico, he worked with many other officers who would rise to great heights in both the Union and Confederate states, including many prominent generals and even presidents including Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. Although McClellan was from the North, he began to identify with southern officers. This empathy developed into a fundamental philosophy difference between McClellan and the Lincoln administration as McClellan spoke out against government policies such as emancipation. McClellan returned to the United States as a military hero. Meanwhile, McClellan's future commander in chief, Abraham Lincoln, forged a different path in the years leading to the Civil War.³⁰

Lincoln was nearly eighteen years older than McClellan, and experienced a different upbringing. With blue-collar roots, Lincoln was less refined but still intelligent. Lincoln, a self-taught lawyer, served during the Mexican-American War as the leader of the Whig party in

²⁹ H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 1-5; Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 6-7; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 5-11.

³⁰ John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 8-14, 34-40.

Illinois, a majority Democrat state, where he won a US congressional election. He spoke against the Mexican-American War, which as a freshman Congressman did not sit well with his party or constituency. Lincoln decided not to seek reelection. At the time, McClellan was also a Whig, but later switched to the Democratic Party. Both men were intelligent, but one can easily identify their prototypical differences. A few years later, when they worked together in the railroad industry, their prototypes continued to diverge to the point that McClellan sought to discredit Lincoln based on their prototype differences alone.³¹

After the Mexican-American War, McClellan returned to USMA as an engineer company commander to assist the faculty to train cadets. This assignment laid the foundation for McClellan's toxicity and eventual demise, based on factors including his inability to get along with his boss, the USMA superintendent, and his clear disdain for his supervisor. This was the first time that McClellan was not in the limelight, and his superiors did not place him on a pedestal as in the past. He performed well when he was in charge, but for this assignment, he failed to grasp the necessity of being a good follower. Three followership models provide some insight into his followership toxicity.³²

Referring to the Chaleff model of followership styles (figure 1), McClellan possessed an individualist style because he challenged and withheld support publically to his supervisor. According to the Kelley followership styles (figure 2), McClellan exhibited alienated follower behaviors because he was openly critical and disgruntled with the superintendent. The 4-D

³¹ John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 2-25; H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 12-13.

³² Lewis B. Mayhew, "George B. McClellan Reevaluated" (PhD diss., Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1952), 5; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 17-18; H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 11.

followership model (figure 3) highlights McClellan's disgruntled followership style, seen in his desire to leave USMA for a more prestigious assignment commensurate with his performance record. McClellan possessed the mix of emotions one normally finds in toxic followers. Another factor proved fundamental in McClellan's development as a toxic follower—as a constitutional expert and avid reader, including classical literature and military theory, he empathized with southern officers more than northern officers, and this divergence manifested in his personal philosophy. For example, he spoke against slavery, but he also claimed that the constitution protected states' rights to practice slavery. In essence, at a young age, his prototype was already different than Lincoln's, and this prototypical difference later led to McClellan's public distrust, disapproval, and insubordination of President Lincoln.³³

After McClellan's disappointing performance during his assignment at USMA, Jefferson Davis, the US Secretary of War and future Confederate president, selected McClellan to lead a reconnaissance expedition to identify potential rail routes through the Cascade Mountains. McClellan's insubordination picked up momentum during the expedition. He not only refused to obey directives issued by the Washington Territory governor—even refusing to give him copies of expedition records or reports—he also failed to find any suitable railroad pass. A later expedition found three passes in the same area that McClellan had surveyed. News of McClellan's insubordination never made it to Washington, and Davis declared the trip a success.³⁴

³³ Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

³⁴ Stephen W. Sears, *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1988), 39-41; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 18-19.

After the Cascade expedition, Davis selected McClellan to serve as one of three observers of the Crimean War from 1855 to 1856. McClellan's trip to Europe left a lasting impression on him, and became the crux of how he would lead the Army in the future. Key aspects of his trip included witnessing the extraordinary discipline and staff organization of the Prussians, the aftermath of the siege of Sebastopol, and the functionality of French uniforms and the Hungarian saddle. He incorporated ideas from all of these experiences into his service in the US Army. For example, he redesigned the American saddle based on the Hungarian design that improved horse and rider endurance—and his design became the Army standard in 1859. Furthermore, McClellan studied the French military theorist Maurice de Saxe who advocated siege warfare and other tactics to limit combat casualties, prevent property damage, and coerce governments to negotiate. Additionally, the prolonged exposure to the hospitality of the European elite fueled his arrogance. Of the three observers, only McClellan served in the Civil War, making him the most qualified officer—Union or Confederate—at the war's onset. Despite the apparent advantages afforded by these military qualifications, McClellan's insubordination and prototypical differences from Lincoln damaged both his own career performance and the early-war effectiveness of the Union Army.³⁵

After returning from Europe, McClellan accepted a lucrative position as the chief engineer and later, the vice president of the Central Illinois Railroad. Abraham Lincoln was the railroad's lawyer and Senator Stephen Douglas was a key benefactor. The relationship between these three men and the railroad foreshadowed McClellan and Lincoln's toxic relationship during

³⁵ Lewis B. Mayhew, "George B. McClellan Reevaluated" (PhD diss., Michigan State college of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1952), 7; H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 13-15; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 19-20; Edward H. Bonekemper III, *McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2007), 10.

the Civil War. McClellan, who had a refined and white-collar background, viewed the self-made Lincoln, a blue-collar, self-educated lawyer as a lesser class of citizen. McClellan did not agree with slavery, but was tolerant of it, while Lincoln viewed slavery as an abomination of human rights. In 1860, Lincoln became the Republican nominee for president, and Douglas became the Democratic nominee. McClellan, who changed parties from Whig to Democrat, used the railroad as a political tool. He granted Douglas nearly unlimited and free access to the railroad. On the other hand, McClellan used the railroad against Lincoln. For example, McClellan arranged for a train carrying Lincoln supporters to have an untimely maintenance breakdown until after the polls closed, which prevented the passengers from voting. Even though McClellan was an effective leader, manager, administrator, and combat veteran, his prototype was far different from Lincoln's prototype. This relationship cursed McClellan's command before war ever erupted. Regardless of McClellan's leadership performance, his toxic followership led to his demise.³⁶

At the onset of the Civil War, President Lincoln found himself in a military quagmire because he lacked capable generals to lead Union forces against the Confederate Army. Some of the best candidates for senior general officer positions—men like Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee—sided with the Confederacy rather than the Union because of loyalty to their state. Experienced generals such as General-in-Chief Winfield Scott were too old to lead men in battle. Younger generals possessed limited experience gained during small skirmishes with Native American tribes in the American Midwest; they lacked the experience and knowledge to engage in Napoleonic warfare with large land armies colliding in the hills and forests of the southeast

³⁶ John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 1-3; Stephen W. Sears, *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1988), 58-59.

United States. George B. McClellan possessed balanced characteristics of experience, knowledge, and age that made him the natural choice to lead the Union forces in the field.³⁷

Upon his appointment as the commander of the Army of the Potomac, McClellan's followership toxicity immediately revealed itself. He ignored directives from both Scott and the Secretary of War. McClellan sought successfully to replace Scott as the General-in-Chief, but he retained command of the Army of the Potomac, dividing his time and thereby limiting his effectiveness in both positions. About two weeks after he assumed duty as General-in-Chief, Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward visited McClellan's quarters, but McClellan was not there. About thirty minutes later, McClellan arrived and walked past the President without making eye contact or speaking to him and retired for the evening. This rebuff demonstrated McClellan's failure to understand that Scott had served as a buffer between McClellan and Washington politicians. As General-in-Chief, McClellan could no longer avoid his job's political element, and he soon became the target of criticism for both his political and military failures.³⁸

Lincoln's strategy to win the Civil War centered on the goal of achieving a single decisive victory. McClellan's initial plan aligned with this strategic goal. Initially, it appeared that McClellan would practice effective employment of operational art by using tactical action to meet the political objective. The plan centered on aggregating troops from across the Union into the Army of the Potomac to build a massive force of at least 300,000 soldiers, reminiscent of Napoleon's *Grande Armée*. However, in execution, the plan quickly broke down for several

³⁷ Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 1-7; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 1-50.

³⁸ H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 34-43; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 59; Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 6-9.

reasons. It concentrated the vast majority of soldiers in Northern Virginia at the expense of cutting all other formations throughout the union to skeleton forces, which was not politically viable. McClellan grossly overestimated Confederate strength and capability, causing him to continuously delay action to seek more soldiers. At the time, the Army possessed the Union's only intelligence apparatus, and political leaders did not have the ability to confirm or deny McClellan's intelligence estimates. Meanwhile, other military leaders like Ulysses Grant, Ambrose Burnside, and David Farragut won significant battles over the Confederates, and Lincoln highlighted these victories to motivate McClellan to take action. McClellan also refused to disclose his military plans to either the War Department or the President. This led Lincoln to develop his own opinions and plans. For example, McClellan prepared to conduct a large amphibious operation through the Chesapeake Bay and land within striking distance of Richmond, the Confederate capital. By the time McClellan briefed the plan to the President, Lincoln had developed a preference for an overland campaign. McClellan's persistence to conduct an amphibious operation displayed defiance against the administration rather than bold action that could surprise the Confederate Army. As a result, the Congress organized a committee to oversee the war effort in an attempt to compel Lincoln and McClellan into action.³⁹

Meanwhile, McClellan visited troops daily. He checked on training, morale, and other war preparations. The soldiers viewed McClellan as the mantle of leadership who gave them the

³⁹ William S. Meyers, *General George Brinton McClellan* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), 210, 247; Stephen W. Sears, "Lincoln and McClellan," in *Lincoln's Generals*, ed. Gabor S. Boritt (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5-41; Edward H. Bonekemper III, *McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2007), 25, 158; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 58-59.

confidence and ability to win in combat. Two different McClellans emerged—one who failed to follow political directives, and the other who would lead the Army to victory.⁴⁰

Despite Lincoln's desire for McClellan to attack overland to Richmond, the President tolerated McClellan's plan for an amphibious assault. McClellan executed the operation with over 121,000 troops, beginning the Peninsular Campaign by establishing a staging base at Fort Monroe (southeast of Richmond) and laying siege to Confederate bases and towns along the Virginia coast with the eventual objective of laying siege to Richmond directly. At the last minute, Lincoln withheld about 10,000 of McClellan's men to defend Washington, and McClellan once again stalled. He claimed that the Army was no longer big enough to accomplish the mission. The Army of the Potomac made some progress, but the campaign stalled and was ultimately a strategic defeat. Fed up with McClellan, Lincoln replaced him as General-in-Chief with Major General Henry Halleck, recalled him to Washington to command the city's defenses, and ordered detachment of the preponderance of the Army of the Potomac to Major General John Pope's Army of Virginia. Pope was caustic and soldiers loathed him, but he was aggressive, and Washington was growing hungry for some sort of offensive action in Virginia.⁴¹

Pope did not fare much better. His Army of Virginia suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Second Bull Run. The Union soldiers retreated to Washington, and the Secretary of War reassigned Pope to Minnesota, ending his Civil War service. Lincoln reinstated McClellan's command, and the news spread quickly through the battered force, giving the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac a much-needed second wind. However, McClellan returned to his old

⁴⁰ John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 44-45.

⁴¹ Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 14, 29-36; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 85-117.

habits: exaggerating reports, criticizing the administration publicly, and corresponding directly with Lincoln, bypassing Halleck⁴².

McClellan suffered another strategic defeat in September 1862 at the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest day in American military history. McClellan possessed overwhelming strength compared to Robert E. Lee's army. Lee suffered losses totaling nearly a third of his army, and he withdrew, but McClellan missed a significant opportunity to pursue the Confederates. McClellan declared the battle a success, but he merely achieved a tactical victory, having lost sight of the political objective of destroying Lee's army. Over the following six weeks, McClellan's army remained inactive even though Lincoln and Halleck directed McClellan resume the offensive. Public criticism of McClellan worsened, while he referred to Lincoln as a despot waging a servile war. He also called the Secretary of War a villain and Halleck a fool. By October 1862, Lincoln began referring to the Army of the Potomac as McClellan's bodyguard. The Secretaries of War, Treasury, Interior, and Navy all agreed that Lincoln needed to fire McClellan. Lincoln waited until November 1862 to relieve McClellan, ironically, for the sole reason that McClellan possessed a very different prototype. Keeping McClellan in command secured more Democratic Party votes in the mid-term election for candidates who supported Lincoln. Once the election was over, Lincoln had no further use of McClellan, and replaced him with Burnside.⁴³

Analysis and Conclusion

Many historians claimed that Lincoln relieved McClellan due to poor leadership resulting from his inaction and incompetence as a senior army general. However, McClellan's followership

⁴² Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 36.

⁴³ Edward H. Bonekemper III, *McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2007), 123-55; Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 34-36, 56.

toxicity was a major factor that contributed to his firing, and in many ways, his followership style negatively affected his leadership style. McClellan, like other Union generals, fought according to principles taught at USMA before the Civil War. McClellan and his classmates learned that they should conduct maneuver warfare to isolate their enemy and compel him to surrender. McClellan studied Maurice de Saxe, who advocated siege warfare—a method employed by many Civil War generals. He also witnessed successful sieges in the Mexican-American War and the Crimean War. McClellan erred by failing to adjust his tactical employment of forces to achieve presidential directives. Lincoln's strategic priorities required a more aggressive approach, and in his dogmatic adherence to accepted methods, McClellan failed to follow, which manifested in poor decisions and, ultimately, in a failure to practice operational art. A comparison of McClellan to Ulysses S. Grant highlights McClellan's failed followership.⁴⁴

Grant served as the commander of the Army of the Potomac from March 1864 to the end of the war, leading his forces with boldness and determination while following the guidance of his political leaders. Grant possessed a similar prototype to McClellan. Both men claimed that the federal government should not decide the legality of slavery, and states should have the right to decide individual slavery issues. Grant also used tactics and possessed mission command characteristics much like McClellan's, but McClellan failed miserably, while Grant won several major battles over the Confederates. They both relied on siege warfare to isolate Confederate forces from necessary resources and coerce Confederate generals into surrendering. They trusted

⁴⁴ Harry T. Williams, *McClellan, Sherman, and Grant* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 23-42; Lewis B. Mayhew, "George B. McClellan Reevaluated" (PhD diss., Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1952), 7; Edward H. Bonekemper III, *McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2007), 10; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 34-40; H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 13-15.

many of their subordinate generals, and gave them enough freedom to exercise disciplined initiative. They also often appealed the President's directives to attack citing that Union forces were understrength or required recovery time. Yet, despite their similarities in prototype and leadership styles, they possessed vastly different follower styles. Put simply, Grant followed the President's orders. After Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, McClellan spoke publically against the President, but Grant complied with the new policy. Similarly, when Lincoln denied Grant's request to delay an attack, Grant acknowledged the order and attacked even though he claimed he was underprepared. In similar situations, McClellan vacillated and complained publically about the President.⁴⁵

McClellan possessed a different prototype than Lincoln, which created the conditions for McClellan's toxic followership. McClellan, a Democrat, came from an affluent, white-collar family whereas Lincoln, a Republican, made his way as a self-taught blue-collar lawyer. Lincoln placed emancipation at the forefront of national policy in the Civil War, but McClellan opposed this action claiming that emancipation was an issue internal to individual states. Their prototype differences did not doom the two men to a relationship fraught with insoluble friction. In many cases, prototype differences create a healthy difference of ideas that drives dialogue between leaders, enhancing their problem solving abilities. The friction arose because their prototype difference led McClellan to show open disdain for the president.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Lewis B. Mayhew, "George B. McClellan Reevaluated" (PhD diss., Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1952), ii; Harry T. Williams, *McClellan, Sherman, and Grant* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 9-42, 79-110; Stephen R. Taaffe, "Grant as General in Chief: March 1864 to April 1865," in *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006); William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschel, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 152-54; Edward H. Bonekemper III, *McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2007), 12.

⁴⁶ Michael A. Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," in *Social Psychology*:

McClellan's leadership style contributed to this friction. Referring to Chaleff's leadership styles (figure one), McClellan falls under the individualist category—he openly challenged Washington politicians and offered little support, voiced public disdain of political decisions, and deliberately ignored orders. According to Kelley's leadership styles (figure two), McClellan's actions place him in the alienated follower category. His habitually contrarian behavior, caused him no remorse in challenging, even berating the administration. The 4-D followership model (figure 3), highlights that McClellan was clearly disgruntled with political decisions. Thus, McClellan's followership style and conflicting prototype with Lincoln led to his firing. While many claim that Lincoln fired McClellan for being a terrible leader, his prototype differences and followership style created personal conflict between McClellan and Lincoln that the President could not overlook. McClellan's toxic followership manifested in a leadership style incompatible with the administration, and Lincoln relieved him.⁴⁷

Joseph E. Johnston

Introduction

On April 26, 1865, Confederate General Joseph Johnston surrendered nearly 90,000 soldiers to William Tecumseh Sherman in the largest surrender of the Civil War and one of the largest in US military history. Confederate president Jefferson Davis labeled Johnston a traitor

Handbook of Basic Principles, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007); H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 1-5, 12-13; Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 6-7; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 5-11, 2-25.

⁴⁷ Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

even though Lee's surrender to Grant more than two weeks earlier foreshadowed the end of hostilities. Controversy surrounded Johnston's surrender—one of a series of events highlighting Johnston and Davis' tumultuous relationship. Twice before the surrender, Davis appointed and later relieved Johnston as one of the key commanders of the Confederate Army. The highest-ranking officer to resign from the US military and join the Confederates, Johnston won the Confederate's first and last victories of the Civil War, at the battles of First Bull Run and Bentonville respectively. His soldiers admired and respected him. However, Johnston often publicized his disagreements with Davis through the media, politicians, and other military leaders, claiming that political directives constrained tactical options, forcing him to make tactical decisions that violated Davis' policy. Many historians have criticized Johnston's actions during the Civil War and identified him as one the key individuals that contributed to the defeat of the Confederacy. Analysis of Johnston's actions during the war demonstrates that his unfortunate legacy resulted more from toxic followership than poor leadership.⁴⁸

Unlike many other Civil War generals, Johnston did not keep a diary, and he wrote few letters to family and friends. He did, however, publish one of the first postwar memoirs, defending his actions while criticizing Davis. Many historians cite Johnston's Civil War failures and defensive memoir as evidence of poor generalship, but a different picture emerges when one considers Johnston's early life and his stressed relationship with Davis that dates back to their attendance at USMA starting in 1825.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968); Richard M. McMurry, "Ole Joe in Virginia: Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's 1861-1862 Period of Command in the East," in *Leadership and Command in the American Civil War* (Campbell, CA: Savas Woodbury Publishers, 1996); "Bennett Place," North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, last modified October 6, 2015, accessed March 11, 2016, <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bennett/main.htm>.

⁴⁹ Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 9-21.

Early Life, Military Career, and Toxicity in the Confederacy

Johnston came from a large, patriotic family in rural Southwestern Virginia. As a child, he often attended Revolutionary War reenactments. As the son of a judge, Johnston's family valued education, but he had a modest upbringing. He also developed into an avid outdoorsman and became locally famous for his courage and stoicism. Johnston easily secured an appointment to the USMA.⁵⁰

Johnston's classmates included future Confederate leaders Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Albert Sydney Johnston (no relation). Joseph Johnston became close friends with Robert E. Lee. Both men were straight-laced during their academic career, and they rarely got into trouble. Conversely, Jefferson Davis often found himself on the verge of dismissal. Davis' circle of friends consisted of Southerners, but Johnston never associated with them. Thus, from an early age one can identify evidence of Johnston and Davis' prototype differences. While subtle at USMA, these differences eventually yielded a toxic leader-follower relationship.⁵¹

Sylvanus Thayer, the USMA superintendent at the time, ignored the commonly accepted college curriculum of classical literature, focusing instead on math, engineering, and natural science. Additionally, Napoleonic warfare and French culture influenced the warfare curriculum (at the time, French general Marquis de Lafayette was at the height of his popularity in the United States). Warfare studies centered on fortifications, bridges, and artillery as the key war-winning technologies. Johnston also enjoyed studying French. On his own time, Johnston developed the necessary proficiency to read French literature including works by philosopher Voltaire and

⁵⁰ Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968); Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 9-21.

⁵¹ Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 14-21.

military theorist Antoine-Henri Jomini. While at USMA, Johnston developed an eye problem that made him essentially blind at night, causing him great difficulty when studying. Despite this challenge, Johnston performed well at USMA. He finished in the top third of his class, behind Lee, but better than both Davis and A. S. Johnston.⁵²

After graduation, Johnston's military career included service in four wars: the Black Hawk War, the Seminole Wars, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War. He filled the key position of aide to General-in-Chief Winfield Scott during the Seminole Wars. In this role, the young Johnston observed the administration's actions that constrained Scott's ability to wage war against the Seminole uprising. The Congress criticized Scott's lack of success even though his soldiers lacked enough water to fight in the Floridian summer heat while wearing winter uniforms. This experience influenced Johnston's future decisions, having witnessed what many military leaders regarded as political interference. As a result, Johnston resigned his commission to become a civil engineer, and he returned to the Seminole Wars as a civilian. Not long thereafter, Seminole warriors attacked his party, wounding all of the officers. Johnston took control of the situation, rallied the soldiers, and repelled the attack. Johnston's civil service ended up being short-lived as this event motivated him to re-enter active service.⁵³

⁵² Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 9-21; Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 1-20; William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 32; J. D. Hittle, ed., "Jomini and his Summary of The Art of War," in *Roots of Strategy*, bk. 2 (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987), 395-431; Charles Messenger, Introduction to *The Art of War* by Antoine Henri de Jomini (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992). One of the key campaigns that shaped Jomini's theories was Napoleon's invasion of Russia. During the campaign, the Russians traded space for time, causing Napoleon to over-extend his army and increasing the vulnerability of his logistical systems. During the US Civil War, Johnston used this same tactic in an attempt to over-extend Union forces.

⁵³ Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968); Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston." PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991, 21-23.

During periods between wars, the War Department assigned Johnston as an artillery battery commander at Fort Monroe, Virginia, but this duty required his frequent deployment on temporary duty throughout the United States. During this temporary duty, he attended to a wide variety of tasks, such as improving harbors, conducting coastal surveys, developing maps, and reacting to political crises. Two such crises had lasting effect on Johnston. The first occurred in 1832 when South Carolina came close to secession. In response, President Andrew Jackson sent federal troops—including Johnston's battery—to Charleston. Three of Johnston's brothers served in the South Carolina militia and would have been declared enemies if Jackson decided to use military force. A second key crisis occurred in late 1833—three years after ratification of the Indian Removal Act—between white Americans and Creek Indians in Alabama. Johnston's company, ordered to Alabama to reestablish control, managed to move only fifteen miles per day through the rough terrain and bad weather. In a letter to one of his brothers, Johnston seemed to question the government's actions when he wrote that he believed the expedition lacked a sound purpose.⁵⁴

In 1846, Johnston found himself sailing with Scott to the Mexican-American War. During the war, he once again proved his ability as a combat leader and earned three battlefield promotions for gallantry. By comparison, Scott promoted Lee only twice. As a testament to Johnston's bravery, he often continued to lead even when wounded by enemy fire. Scott jokingly commented, "Johnston is a great soldier, but he has the unfortunate knack of getting himself shot in nearly every engagement." In total, Johnston suffered combat injuries no less than ten times throughout his career.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 23-24; Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 28-29.

⁵⁵ Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph

Johnston's life revolved around military service and patriotism from being a Revolutionary War enthusiast as a child to active federal service through three wars. Even in his short stint as a civilian, he worked for the US Military. In his long career before the Civil War, he often disagreed with the purpose of military action. As a professional soldier, he did not participate in politics like many other officers at the time. However, he often questioned the logic of political decisions, and the seeds of toxic followership began to take root. While Johnston forged a military career, Jefferson Davis charted a different path.⁵⁶

Davis and Johnston's backgrounds—despite some similarities—are indicative of their different prototypes. They were close in age, came from large families, graduated from USMA, and served in the Mexican-American war together. They had both made statements indicating the desire to preserve the integrity of the Union, while expressing support for states' rights to succeed. Additionally, their wives were close friends—but here their similarities end.⁵⁷

Davis was the youngest of ten siblings, and he grew up on his parent's plantation in Mississippi. Davis' parents valued education, but formal instruction was difficult to come by in the rural countryside. Still, his parents ensured Davis attended schools, sending him to boarding schools when necessary. He often befriended older boys who were prone to mischief and developed the ability to talk his way out of punishment—a skill Davis put to use repeatedly

Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 24-25; Robert M. Hughes, *General Johnston* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893), 32 (quote); Joseph B. Mitchell, *Leaders in the Civil War* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc, 1972), 174-75.

⁵⁶ Robert M. Hughes, *General Johnston* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893), 35; Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 30.

⁵⁷ James F. Morgan, "Jefferson Davis: The Military Man and the Politician" (master's thesis, California State University, 1973), iii; William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 3-38.

throughout his childhood and during his attendance at USMA. Once, Davis left school without permission, vowing that he would not return. Davis' father gave him an ultimatum: complete his education, or work on the plantation picking cotton. Davis decided to return to school.⁵⁸

Davis expressed the desire to follow his eldest brother's example and become a lawyer, but his brother convinced him to attend USMA and then later enter politics. At USMA, Davis met and befriended future subordinate A. S. Johnston, but grew to dislike Joseph Johnston. Illustrating their different characteristics at that time, Davis—who associated with other Southerners—found himself in consistent trouble at USMA, but Joseph Johnston focused on academics and avoided trouble. On at least one occasion, when USMA cadre caught Davis violating regulations with other cadets, Davis testified at a court martial against his friends, refusing to incriminate himself while arguing unapologetically against the prosecution, narrowly avoiding conviction and expulsion. Davis graduated from USMA, but he commissioned as an infantry officer—at the time considered a lower class of soldier than engineers or artillerymen. During his short military career, Davis served in the Black Hawk war, but he soon left the military to marry the daughter of a future US President, Zachary Taylor. This led soon thereafter to his own political career, serving as the US Secretary of War, a US representative, and a senator. Although Davis and Johnston possessed similar backgrounds, they developed different characteristics; unsurprisingly, they chose different career paths after their time together at USMA.⁵⁹

The events leading up to the Civil War foreshadowed Davis and Johnston's turbulent relationship. Johnston was technically from the South, but he had many ties with the north. One

⁵⁸ William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 3-38; James F. Morgan, "Jefferson Davis: The Military Man and the Politician" (master's thesis, California State University, 1973), 1-40.

⁵⁹ William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 3-38; James F. Morgan, "Jefferson Davis: The Military Man and the Politician" (master's thesis, California State University, 1973), 1-40. Davis took a short hiatus from his political career to serve as a colonel in the Mexican-American war.

of these was his friendship with future Union general George McClellan. In 1855, Johnston transferred from artillery to cavalry, and he soon met McClellan. The two officers formed a common bond in their efforts to improve the quality of cavalry units. His wife Lydia was from Maryland, a Union state. The first significant public conflict between Johnston and Davis occurred in June 1860 when the US Army quartermaster general died. Winfield Scott, the general-in-chief at that time, recommended four officers to the secretary of war to hold the position: A. S. Johnston, Charles F. Smith, Robert E. Lee, and Joseph E. Johnston. Jefferson Davis, the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, voted for his old friend A. S. Johnston—but he was part of the minority. The US Senate selected Joseph Johnston as the new quartermaster general with a vote of thirty-one to three. This opened the way for Joseph Johnston to become the second-highest-ranking officer in the US Army, the first USMA graduate to become a general officer in the regular army, and later the highest ranking officer to accept a commission in the Confederacy.⁶⁰

Less than a year later, Johnston faced a key dilemma that would forever affect his life and legacy when his home state of Virginia seceded from the Union. Despite Davis and Johnston's differences, their wives were close friends. Davis' wife urged Lydia Johnston to convince Joseph that he should refuse to join the Confederacy simply because of Davis' disdain for Johnston. As the two sides competed for experienced officers, Winfield Scott spoke to Joseph, and later to Lydia, in an attempt to convince them not to defect to the Confederacy. Sensing Johnston's ambivalence, Scott asked that even if Johnston did not fight for the Union, that he remain neutral rather than fight for the Confederacy, but Johnston also had to weigh financial concerns when

⁶⁰ Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 27-29; Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *A Different Valor: the Story of General Joseph E. Johnston, C.S.A* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), 21-25; Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 1-6.

making his decision. Unlike Davis, Johnston was not wealthy and relied on his military income. After considering his options Johnston, like many other Virginia natives including Robert E. Lee, resigned his commission as a US Army officer to join the Confederate Army. Even though Lydia's family and many of their friends were from the North, the couple traveled to Richmond, Virginia with little more than the personal belongings they could carry. Davis and Johnston possessed different prototypes, and many individuals that knew both men recognized the likelihood they would not have a healthy relationship. As it turned out, their relationship developed into a powder keg, merely waiting to ignite.⁶¹

The Confederacy faced the immediate challenge of building military capacity and capability from the ground up. In doing so, the Confederates passed a series of confusing and often conflicting laws regarding military organization. They created four grades of general officer (the US Army at the time used only two grades), and further subdivided these into three types of general officer rank: permanent, brevet, and staff. Permanent generals' rank was enduring, having been authorized by law. Brevet and staff generals served as a temporary rank, to meet the need for more generals than the law authorized that the Confederate Army required for specific purposes. Adding to this complexity, the Confederacy created three types of armies: provisional, regular, and state. Provisional and regular armies served under the Confederate national government, whereas governors controlled state armies. Johnston's first official act highlights the confusing nature of this legislation. Davis ordered Johnston to assume command over Stonewall Jackson and the Army of the Shenandoah at Harper's Ferry. Jackson—who was in the state army—was cordial when Johnston arrived, but did not relinquish command until he received state

⁶¹ Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *A Different Valor: the Story of General Joseph E. Johnston, C.S.A.* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), 21-25; Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 71-73.

orders. The subtle difference in status had a profound effect when Johnston later argued against Davis and other generals based on legal interpretations of these laws.⁶²

Johnston commanded Confederate forces at the first major battles in Virginia. The Army of the Shenandoah soon fought at Harper's Ferry and the Battle of First Bull Run. During these operations, Johnston's actions suggest that he was capable general and leader. For example, Johnston communicated fluidly with key subordinates, and he incorporated their feedback in his plans and orders. Written orders from Richmond were often vague and required interpretation. Johnston attempted to execute the spirit of these orders rather than just the specific directives in them. Once, the Confederate Secretary of War bypassed Johnston and sent an order to Stonewall Jackson directly. Jackson refused to execute until Johnston delivered the order. Jackson also expressed the desire to resign, but Johnston persuaded Jackson to remain in the service. At a personal level, Johnston accepted no luxury and suffered the same ordeals as his soldiers, such as sleeping on the ground. Johnston's subordinates largely viewed him as a good leader who made sound tactical decisions. However, as a follower he did not perform so well. In particular, when he did not achieve political objectives he blamed Davis for the army's shortfalls rather than accepting responsibility himself.⁶³

During these initial operations, Johnston faced a number of problems, especially subsistence and administration of his forces. Davis ordered Johnston to pursue McClellan, but

⁶² Richard M. McMurry, "Ole Joe in Virginia: Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's 1861-1862 Period of Command in the East," in *Leadership and Command in the American Civil War* (Campbell, CA: Savas Woodbury Publishers, 1996), 9-12; Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 37-41.

⁶³ Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968); Joseph E. Johnston, "Responsibilities of the First Bull Run," in *Hearts Touched by Fire: The Best of Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, ed. Harold Holzer (New York: The Modern Library, 2011), 128-40; Joseph B. Mitchell, *Military Leaders in the Civil War* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc, 1972), 174-75.

Johnston refused, citing, among other reasons, the inadequate supplies that the government provided his army—too limited, according to Johnston, to enable a pursuit. Claiming that he was the highest-ranking general in the army, Johnston refused any order issued by another general, even if the other general acted on behalf of the administration. Davis took note of Johnston's correspondence and marked the letters as insubordinate. This was only the beginning of Johnston's toxicity, and his insubordination soon evolved from mere nuisance to public defiance.⁶⁴

Johnston's toxicity reached a tipping point when he interpreted Confederate laws differently from the government. The Confederate congress ratified the formal seniority of the top generals as Samuel Cooper (Confederate adjutant and inspector general), Albert S. Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, and P. G. T. Beauregard. Johnston wrote a scathing letter to Davis claiming that the published ranking violated other statutes: "I now and here declare my claim that...I still rightfully hold the rank of first general in the Armies of the Southern Confederacy." This letter caused the gap in Davis and Johnston's relationship to grow to a chasm; they never reconciled their differences. Johnston instead became reticent towards Davis while criticizing him publically with ever-greater frequency.

Referring to the Chaleff model of followership styles (figure 1), Johnston possessed an individualist style. He withheld support for Davis while challenging both him and the Confederate Congress' authority with increasing frequency and tenacity. Of the Kelley followership styles (figure 2), Johnston exhibited alienated follower behaviors, openly criticizing and expressing irritation towards Davis. According to the 4-D followership model (figure 3), Johnston shifted from disengaged to disgruntled followership styles while fighting in Virginia.

⁶⁴ Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *A Different Valor: the Story of General Joseph E. Johnston, C.S.A.* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), 62-71; Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations* (New York: Indiana University Press, 1959), 70-73.

His productivity decreased largely due to disagreements with Richmond, but he displayed loyalty to the Confederacy—the disengaged followership style. After the Confederate Congress declared that Johnston was not the highest ranking general, he shifted to the disgruntled style, and he continued to exhibit disgruntled followership for the remainder of the war.⁶⁵

The tension continued to build between Davis and Johnston in the spring of 1862. Union general George McClellan with his Army of the Potomac embarked on the Peninsular campaign and threatened to attack Richmond directly. Johnston assumed command of the Confederate Army of the Potomac with orders to defend Richmond, secure Yorktown (southeast of Richmond), and counter-attack McClellan. Johnston assessed that McClellan’s army possessed superior strength, and Johnston deliberately withdrew, trading space for time. Many Confederate politicians claimed that by retreating, Johnston handed Yorktown over to the enemy and left Richmond vulnerable as well. On May 31, 1862, at the battle of Seven Pines, enemy gunfire wounded Johnston ending his leadership in Virginia. Davis used Johnston’s convalescence as the opportunity to relieve Johnston and replace him with Lee. Johnston’s actions as a combat leader in Virginia appeared logical from a tactical standpoint, but they violated political objectives, and Davis could not tolerate this insubordination.⁶⁶

In November 1862, Davis reassigned Johnston to command the newly formed Western Department, created to unify efforts in the Western Theater by encompassing Confederate states

⁶⁵ Ira Chaleff, “Creating New Ways of Following,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, “Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

⁶⁶ Steven H. Newton, *Joseph E. Johnston and the Defense of Richmond* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 199-214; Curt Anders, “Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional’s Professional,” in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1968), 85; Mitchell, 174-75.

from eastern Louisiana to northern Georgia. Johnston established his headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi. In Virginia, Johnston had controlled only a few thousand soldiers in a relatively small area. The vast expanses of the Western Theater posed bigger problems. Davis implemented a terrain-based policy of defending all areas of the Confederacy simultaneously. Johnston preferred an enemy-based policy, which he saw as more sound because it gave commanders the flexibility to concentrate forces against specific Union threats. A key point of friction soon revealed the differences in the two men's views: the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Davis ordered Johnston to retain Vicksburg at all costs, but at a key point in General U. S. Grant's campaign to capture the city, Johnston ordered the commander in Vicksburg, Lieutenant General John Pemberton to preserve the force by exiting the city and fighting Grant in open terrain. Pemberton ultimately followed Davis' directive to defend the city, retreating into its defenses after Johnston hesitated to reinforce Pemberton's forces or place military pressure on Grant. In the end, Grant besieged Vicksburg and forced Pemberton to surrender the city—a key turning point in the war.⁶⁷

Throughout the Vicksburg Campaign, Johnston became increasingly toxic by blaming Davis publicly for problems in the western department. His criticism started as official correspondence with Davis, but then elevated to public statements to the media. Johnston became his own worst enemy as Davis started responding to accusations in the media from a subordinate. Johnston also befriended Confederate Senator Louis Wigfall, a staunch opponent of Davis. Johnston fueled the political fire by forwarding Davis' correspondence to Wigfall. Instead of

⁶⁷ William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschel, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 50, 94, 124-32; Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 87-93; Steven E. Woodworth, ed. *Leadership and Command in the American Civil War* (Campbell, CA: Savas Woodbury Publishers, 1996), 24-26; Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 173-238.

seeking to act in accordance with policy, Johnston stagnated when policy did not seem to him to align with his intended tactical action. Despite the Vicksburg defeat, Davis later gave Johnston an additional opportunity to redeem himself.⁶⁸

In November 1863, Grant defeated General Braxton Bragg at Missionary Ridge near Chattanooga, Tennessee. By this point in the war, Bragg had suffered several major defeats, and his soldiers' morale waned accordingly. At one point, Bragg's soldiers petitioned Davis to replace Bragg with Johnston. Additionally, Bragg's wife was gravely ill, and he asked to resign his commission. Davis reluctantly agreed. After assuming command of Bragg's forces, Johnston provided Davis a candidly bleak outlook of the army. Johnston had fallen from Davis' favor, and the report fell on deaf ears. In the interim, Grant became the Union general-in-chief and Sherman assumed command to begin his march to the sea. Johnston devised a plan to trade space for time and intentionally fall back towards Atlanta like during the Peninsular campaign. After withdrawing to the outskirts of Atlanta, Johnston accurately predicted Sherman's next attack and prepared skillfully to ambush the Union army. However, just before Sherman's attack, Davis relieved Johnston for the second time, replacing him with General John B. Hood, a more offensive-spirited general. Hood actually pleaded with Johnston to ignore the termination, but Johnston accepted his fate. The Confederates in Georgia quickly collapsed and dissipated as Sherman continued his march. Johnston's termination sent him into early retirement, but little did he know he would soon return to command troops.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 173-238; Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 85; Joseph B. Mitchell, *Military Leaders in the Civil War* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc, 1972), 87-93.

⁶⁹ Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 93-104; Joseph B. Mitchell, *Military Leaders in the Civil War* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc, 1972), 187-93.

After Sherman reached Savannah, Georgia, occupying the city in December 1864, he turned north to attack through South and then North Carolina. In a last ditch effort, Davis ordered the Army of Tennessee to block Sherman's attack. Davis opposed reinstatement of Johnston as the commander, but the Confederate House of Representatives overruled the president with a vote of fifty to twenty-five in favor. For one last time, Johnston commanded combat forces. As a testament to Johnston's reputation as a field commander, merely by assuming command, Johnston raised the morale of the Army, and Sherman slowed his advance, taking a more cautious approach that acknowledged Johnston's formidable skill as an opponent. In March 1865, Johnston stood firm to win the Confederate's final victory at the battle of Bentonville, North Carolina. Within the next month, Lee surrendered to Grant, John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln, and Johnston surrendered to Sherman. Other Confederate surrenders occurred before and after Johnston's, but Davis singled out Johnston's surrender as treasonous. Johnston spent the remainder of his life defending his actions while blaming Davis for his problems.⁷⁰

Analysis and Conclusion

Johnston and Davis represented significantly different prototypes. Johnston's life revolved around military service. His attributes made him a good fit with the army. His intelligence, discipline, and courage proved to be important qualities throughout his career. He served in multiple branches including artillery, engineers, and cavalry. His subordinates, peers,

⁷⁰ Craig L. Symonds, *Joseph E. Johnston* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 342-57; Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *A Different Valor: the Story of General Joseph E. Johnston, C.S.A* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), 361-65; Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 104-09; Alan C. Downs, "'Gone Past all Redemption'? The Early War Years of General Joseph Eggleston Johnston" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 249-52; Henry W. Slocum, "Final Operations of Sherman's Army," in *Hearts Touched by Fire: The Best of Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, ed. Harold Holzer (New York: The Modern Library, 2011).

and superiors alike respected him. As a native of Virginia with personal ties to the North, he joined the Confederacy out of loyalty to his state rather than personal beliefs regarding secession. His circle of friends consisted predominantly of other military leaders.⁷¹

Conversely, Davis' life comprised a wealth of both military and non-military experiences. He served as a young infantry officer, infantry regimental commander, senator, representative, and the US Secretary of War. His circle of friends consisted mostly of Southerners and included US presidents, governors, military leaders, and other politicians. As a plantation owner from the deep South and a well-placed politician, Davis possessed both practical and philosophical reasons to join the Confederacy. As the Confederate president, Davis worked tirelessly to please and synchronize the efforts of a disparate group made up of his constituency, military officers, political allies, and political enemies, whereas Johnston enjoyed the sole focus of defending territory. Davis was a southern political icon; Johnston was an apolitical military icon. Davis and Johnston's prototypical differences were at the root of their stressed relationship, and when Johnston's followership became toxic, he worked against his boss rather than for him. In essence, Johnston's prototype centered on tactics whereas Davis' prototype centered on governance. Johnston's prototypical differences created a situation where he became a toxic follower even though he exhibited attributes of good leadership.

Referring to the Chaleff model of followership styles (figure 1), Johnston possessed an individualist style. By the end of the war, Johnston opposed openly Davis and the Confederate Congress' authority. According to the Kelley followership styles (figure 2), Johnston exhibited alienated follower behaviors. When Johnston disagreed political decisions, he typically became insubordinate by violating political objectives, or he stagnated and did not act. Additionally, his friendship and correspondence with Senator Wigfall—which fueled political battles in

⁷¹ Joseph B. Mitchell, *Military Leaders in the Civil War* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc, 1972), 187.

Richmond—highlights Johnston’s alienation from the administration. According to the 4-D followership model (figure 3), Johnston fell into the disgruntled style. His productivity plummeted, and his willingness to leave the service increased.⁷²

Johnston’s actions and reputation were those of a successful leader. However, as his career progressed, he did not develop qualities of effective followership. He shied away from politics and policy. As a young battery commander, he questioned the political purpose of many military operations. He considered politicians’ role in military affairs one of “meddling.” During his tenure as the quartermaster general, he yielded political matters to the general-in-chief. Over the course of his career, Johnston became increasingly frustrated with perceived political interference in the military. These shortcomings resulted in Johnston’s toxic followership, further straining his relationship with Davis and ultimately bringing about his demise as a military leader.

Douglas MacArthur

Introduction

On April 11, 1951, President Harry S. Truman shocked the nation by firing General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the United Nations (UN) forces in the Korean War. One of America’s most popular and long-serving general officers, MacArthur’s dismissal created public outrage. Barely a week after Truman relieved him of his duties, MacArthur addressed a joint session of congress—a rare event for an American General officer. Many US citizens petitioned for President Truman’s resignation or impeachment. As recorded by historian

⁷² Ira Chaleff, “Creating New Ways of Following,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, “Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time,” in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

Matthew Moten, “State legislatures and city councils passed resolutions condemning him. A Gallup poll showed that two-thirds of Americans opposed MacArthur's dismissal, while only one-quarter approved.” The public viewed the general as a great leader, but Truman fired MacArthur for his insubordination—in other words, for his toxic followership.⁷³

In the political whirlwind, the Congress initiated an inquiry that lasted seven weeks. During the inquiry, MacArthur's fortune began to wane. Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall, General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, all service chiefs, and other senior officials testified against MacArthur. Following congressional testimony, MacArthur toured the country appearing in parades and giving anti-Truman speeches. The public slowly came to understand that Truman needed to terminate MacArthur when he did.⁷⁴

MacArthur's Super-highway to Toxicity

The roots of Douglas MacArthur's mythos—and the development of his style of leadership and followership—trace back to the American Civil War, nearly twenty years before his birth. His father, First Lieutenant Arthur MacArthur received the Medal of Honor for his actions in combat at Missionary Ridge during the battle of Chattanooga, on 25 November 1863. Arthur gained the initiative for his unit by seizing Missionary Ridge, an act that violated orders.

⁷³ Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 255 (quote), 227-70; Richard Lowitt, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1967), 1-3; William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1978), 644-55

⁷⁴ Matthew Moten, “Exit MacArthur,” in *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 255 (quote); Richard Lowitt, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1967), 1-3; William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1978), 644-55; Michael D. Pearlman, *Truman and MacArthur: Policy, Politics, and the Hunger for Honor and Renown*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 169-234.

Arthur used this example and others like it to groom his son for military service, by teaching him to always act on personal insight even if it required violating orders. Douglas' mother contributed to his independent self-image, often saying that she believed in his divine predestination. Swayed by these influences, from an early age Douglas MacArthur believed in just violation of orders and his destiny for greatness. He once stated "it's the orders you disobey that make you famous."⁷⁵ From a young age, MacArthur developed a prototype that includes his conviction that he had permission, or even an obligation, to disobey orders.

Early in his career, MacArthur served as the aide to US Army Chief of Staff Major General Leonard Wood. Like Douglas' father, Wood had a reputation as a bold leader with a propensity for choosing which orders to follow. MacArthur learned much from Wood, about both military leadership and manipulating politicians through public debate. MacArthur developed a tendency for insubordination that surfaced only a few years later, when he served as the chief of staff of the 42nd Infantry Division during the First World War. General John J. Pershing, commander of the Army Expeditionary Force, wanted to break up the 42nd to reinforce other divisions. MacArthur bypassed Pershing, contacting the Secretary of War directly to voice his objections. The 42nd remained intact. According to the Chaleff followership styles (figure 1), MacArthur demonstrated characteristics of an individualist because he actively opposed Pershing without showing loyalty. According to the Kelley followership styles (figure 2), MacArthur demonstrated characteristics of alienated followers because he was critical but not constructive of Pershing.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Matthew Moten, "Exit MacArthur," in *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 229 (quote); Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 1-5.

⁷⁶ Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 5 (quote), 5-10; Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 74; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97.

During World War One (WWI), MacArthur demonstrated exceptional bravery, earning numerous awards and a recommendation for promotion to brigadier general. MacArthur was popular with the division's soldiers as the chief of staff and later as a brigade commander. After the war, MacArthur served as the superintendent of the United States Military Academy, and he began revolutionizing the curriculum. In the years that followed, MacArthur proved to be a great leader through his efforts in training soldiers, developing leaders, modernizing the Army, and even leading the 1928 US Olympic team. By this time, MacArthur possessed a well-developed prototype based largely on his father's legacy, the example of his mentors, and his own courage. MacArthur's successes reinforced a prototype allowing insubordination because repeatedly, MacArthur's insubordination yielded positive results. After WWI, MacArthur continued to enhance his leadership abilities, but his followership attributes grew increasingly toxic.⁷⁷

In 1930, President Franklin D. Roosevelt selected MacArthur as the US Army Chief of Staff. One of MacArthur's key challenges was maintaining readiness with a paper army, cut to the bone by an administration focused on ending the Depression while remaining isolationist. MacArthur became frustrated with Roosevelt. In his memoirs, MacArthur wrote that he told the president something to the effect of "when we lost the next war, and an American boy, lying in the mud with an enemy bayonet through his belly, and an enemy foot on his dying throat, spat out his last curse, I wanted the name not to be MacArthur, but Roosevelt." Other political and military leaders observed the growing dissidence between MacArthur and civilian authority figures. MacArthur's aide, then Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, later wrote that he "found MacArthur's towering ego and pomposity deeply repugnant. MacArthur's cavalier willingness to violate army norms and engage in political partisanship alarmed [him]." MacArthur possessed a prototype that shared little in common with the president's, and this affected their relationship in

⁷⁷ Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 5 (quote), 5-16.

many important ways. One can see an example of these differences in the two men's views regarding fiscal policy. The President's prototype included the desire to quickly end the Great Depression by cutting costs wherever he could. MacArthur's prototype included maintaining a strong national defense at the expense of social and economic policy aimed at ending the depression. According to the 4-D followership styles (figure 3), in this encounter, MacArthur was a disgruntled follower, one of the two styles likely to exhibit toxicity. MacArthur's popularity, disagreement with the administration, and willingness to disobey orders set conditions for a decade of toxic followership.⁷⁸

Before 1936, one could argue that much of MacArthur's alleged insubordination merely stemmed from healthy discourse as he attempted to give sound military advice regarding what was best for the Army. However, his attitude precipitated a series of events that led to his manner of followership devolving from disagreement to severe toxicity. In a bout of political maneuvering, President Roosevelt distanced himself from MacArthur by assigning him as the military advisor to the Philippines; MacArthur brought Eisenhower and Major James B. Ord with him as assistants. Eisenhower and Ord developed the plans for the defense of the Philippines and the modernization and training of the Filipino Army. The government never fully funded these plans, and with each revision, the War Department cut troops, reduced equipment procurement, and lowered service member pay. In April 1936, MacArthur published a report describing the defense plan with a military force capable of repelling any foreign invasion including a sizable bomber group, and a small but lethal navy. MacArthur's report was optimistic and failed to convey the gravity of the situation. He tried to garner political support using motivational rhetoric

⁷⁸ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 101 (first quote); Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 21 (second quote), 21-26; Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

rather than the hard truth. For example, the US forces in the Philippines were building a small air force, but the purpose was to use cargo planes to move soldiers and equipment to the numerous islands in the archipelago rather than building an offensive air component. MacArthur exhibited an alienated followership style (figure 2) where he was openly critical of the administration, but passive in any effort to provide constructive feedback to his superiors. From the mid 1930s forward, MacArthur exaggerated reports, became increasingly and openly disdainful of the president, and adopted a followership style that led to his eventual demise.⁷⁹

MacArthur retired from active duty in 1937 and remained as the military advisor in the Philippines. He might have faded into obscurity if not for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that led America to declare war on Japan in December 1941. As one of the top commanders in the Pacific, MacArthur seemed a natural choice to lead troops in combat in the Pacific Theater. True to form, he employed the same methods as a senior leader in the Pacific Theater during World War II (WWII) that he used as a division chief of staff and brigade commander, when he had achieved success and popularity by taking bold action even if it violated orders. In the Pacific Theater, however, he performed on a much larger stage and with much more at stake. MacArthur controlled the media covering operations in the Pacific, demanding attention and expecting to receive credit for nearly all US military success in that theater. In Europe, military leaders

⁷⁹ Michael Korda, "The MacArthur Years," in *Ike: An American Hero* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967), 196-232; Douglas MacArthur, "The Keystone of the Philippine Defense," in *A Soldier Speaks: Public Papers and Speeches of General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965); Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941*, ed. Daniel D. Holt and James W. Leyerzapf (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 306-11; Peter Lyon, "Between Wars," in *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974); Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 31-42, 98 (survey information); Stephen E. Ambrose, "Between the Wars," *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97.

allowed commanders and their units at various echelons to receive due credit, which caused leaders like Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley to share the attention of the media in the European Theater. This led to a dilution of press coverage in Europe, which caused MacArthur to garner the majority of global media attention, making him the most popular US Army general of the 1940s. According to public surveys, MacArthur led polls with forty-three percent of the votes, which far exceeded those of Eisenhower and Patton (who polled at thirty-one and seventeen percent respectively).⁸⁰

As much as the public liked MacArthur, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman disliked him. Along with many other Washington officials, both military and civilian, both presidents wanted to oust MacArthur because of his insubordination, but his success and popularity gave him the political momentum to do what he wanted, rather than what his superiors wanted—at least for a time. Additionally, the administrations divided their attention between the European theater, the Pacific theater, and domestic affairs, which enabled MacArthur's insubordination because his actions made up only part of a much larger problem facing the United States. While the media might have directed the majority of public attention to MacArthur, America's political leaders could not afford to focus so narrowly on one theater in a global war.⁸¹

After WWII, MacArthur became the supreme commander for the allied powers (SCAP) in Japan. While his continued service at such a high level might seem odd given his unpopularity

⁸⁰ Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 39-125; Mark Perry, *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 166-67, 333.

⁸¹ Michael Pearlman, "Truman and MacArthur, Before Korea," in *Truman and MacArthur: Policy, Politics, and the Hunger for Honor and Renown* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008); Mark Perry, "Tokyo Bay," in *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Richard B. Frank, *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 77-101; Richard H. Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), 63-94.

with the politicians in Washington, he emerged from WWII as a hero, having given the president no excuse to relieve him. In fact, President Truman granted MacArthur significant autonomy in Japanese reconstruction. When the administration attempted to exercise oversight, MacArthur executed plans as he pleased. Ironically, MacArthur's plans resembled Roosevelt's New Deal even though MacArthur was publically critical of both administrations. On the eve of the Korean War, he emerged once again as a popular hero who publically undermined superiors—but this time he finally went too far.⁸²

In June 1950, North Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel, invading South Korea and drawing the United States into another war. MacArthur soon found himself appointed the commander of all United Nations (UN) forces in Korea. The United Nations possessed limited aims in Korea, with the primary objective of restoring the 38th parallel as the sovereign border between North and South Korea. When UN forces achieved a major victory, such as the Inchon landing, MacArthur publically boasted as if the success was a result of his mastery of warfare. When UN forces faced major defeat, as they did after the communist Chinese invasion of Korea as North Korea's ally, MacArthur publically blamed the administration's policies for limiting his ability to win the war. Truman wanted to resolve the conflict quickly and prevent a third world war. MacArthur desired to expand the war by using naval forces to blockade China, bombing Chinese bases in Manchuria, bolstering defenses in Formosa (Taiwan), and using nationalist Chinese forces to fight for the United Nations in Korea and to invade China near Hong Kong. Truman believed expanding the war might result in direct military involvement from the Soviet

⁸² Mark Perry, "Tokyo Bay," in *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Richard B. Frank, "Shogun in Khaki," in *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Richard H. Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), 63-94.

Union. MacArthur's incessant desire to increase military action upset the president, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, other federal agencies, and many international partners including the United Kingdom.⁸³

The Joint Chiefs of Staff struggled to keep MacArthur's actions within policy parameters. General Bradley issued a gag order. Service chiefs visited Japan and Korea to convey the president's wishes personally and report unfiltered information back to the administration. MacArthur continued publishing fabricated or exaggerated reports as he had done since 1936. He directed his senior Air Force subordinate, General George Stratemeyer to produce a report that exaggerated the damage inflicted by enemy MiG fighters to gain support for bombing airfields in Manchuria. MacArthur claimed that keeping soldiers' morale high was paramount, and he blamed low morale on the UN forces' withdrawal after the Chinese invasion. MacArthur surrounded himself with individuals who shared his opinion concerning how to conduct war in Korea, and they began to present only information that supported MacArthur's beliefs. MacArthur recruited and staffed individuals who shared his prototype of wanting to escalate the war, which exacerbated the divide between MacArthur and Washington. The US Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff, Generals J. Lawton Collins and Hoyt Vandenberg secretly visited troops in Korea to find out that MacArthur's reports on morale were fictitious. In February 1951, MacArthur violated the gag order four times and criticized political policy in the media. President Truman, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense, George Marshall, all agreed that the president

⁸³ Richard Lowitt, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1967), 1-35; Richard H. Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), 97-176; Richard B. Frank, "From the Center to the Fringe," *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 139-64; Matthew Moten, "Exit MacArthur," in *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Douglas MacArthur, "Frustration in Korea," in *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964).

needed to relieve MacArthur because of four reasons that all center on toxic followership.

MacArthur did not adhere to political objectives in Korea, he disobeyed the gag order, the joint chiefs did not know which orders MacArthur would choose to follow, and the administration worried about the weakening civilian control over the military. Truman acted quickly to order MacArthur's return to the United States.⁸⁴

Analysis and Conclusion

MacArthur fell into a different prototype than either Presidents Roosevelt or Truman. MacArthur believed insubordination was acceptable. Stories from his father, examples of his own successes, and popular fanfare reinforced this belief. He thought the United States should always have a sizeable force to encounter any threat. He took pride in his ability to manipulate politicians and policy to suite his image and desires. The presidents, however, fell into a different prototype because they faced competing problems including the Great Depression, European reconstruction, other domestic problems, and the Cold War. During Congressional testimony, MacArthur claimed his mission in Korea was to win the war, and he was not worried about provoking a military response from the Soviet Union because that was the president's problem. Both presidents were career politicians and understood the relationship as prescribed by the US Constitution between the military and the government.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came From the North* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010) 107-416; Matthew Moten, "Exit MacArthur," in *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Richard Lowitt, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1967), 1-35; Richard H. Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), 97-176; Richard B. Frank, "From the Center to the Fringe," *MacArthur* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 139-64; Douglas MacArthur, "Frustration in Korea," in *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964).

⁸⁵ Richard Lowitt, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1967); Frank Freidel and Hugh Sidey, "Harry S. Truman," *The White House*, accessed

According to prototype theory, MacArthur's subordinates generally supported MacArthur's decisions and opposed the administration because MacArthur and his closest subordinates shared prototypes. This sharing of prototypes garnered nearly unlimited loyalty from MacArthur's subordinates. Conversely, the opposing prototypes between MacArthur and his political leaders in Washington created an environment in which MacArthur believed that the politicians were always to blame for his lack of military success. Present-day military analysis can identify similar trends in prototype differences between the military and politicians.

Referring to Chaleff's leadership styles (figure one), MacArthur would fall under the individualist category because he greatly challenged the administration and offered little support, publically debating policy in the media, and deliberately violating orders. According to Kelley's leadership styles (figure two), MacArthur's actions place him in the alienated follower category although he sought to appear as an exemplary follower. He was habitually contrarian, but held no remorse in challenging, even berating the administration. According to the 4-D followership model (figure 3), MacArthur was clearly disgruntled with political decisions. MacArthur's followership style and conflicting prototype with the presidents led to his firing. Many claim that MacArthur was a great leader, and his numerous successes support this claim. However, as he became a great leader, his follower attributes became toxic. He undermined leadership directly in private, then manipulated them publically, and finally expressed outright disdain of his leaders.⁸⁶

December 18, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/harrystruman>; Frank Freidel and Hugh Sidey, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," The White House, accessed December 18, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/franklindroosevelt>.

⁸⁶ Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

MacArthur's followership style precipitated a breakdown in mission command as a leader. He routinely violated three principles of US Army mission command philosophy. He did not act in a manner that created shared understanding. Erroneous reporting and the filtering of MacArthur's inner circle prevented achieving a shared understanding between tactical units, MacArthur's headquarters, and Washington. Neither did he exercise disciplined initiative. He did exercise initiative, but not disciplined initiative because he did not act within his commander's intent—particularly when provoking the Chinese to enter the war in Korea, which created significant risk of a major escalation of the war. This fits with MacArthur's lack of ability (or concern) to only accept prudent risk. MacArthur did accept significant operational risk with feats like the Inchon landing, but he did not accept prudent risk. He was willing to risk Soviet military involvement by expanding the war. This act was a gamble, not prudent risk. MacArthur's followership toxicity led to violating mission command principles, and ultimately, a failure in operational art.⁸⁷

Doctrinally, MacArthur's role was to practice operational art by orchestrating UN forces in Korea to meet strategic objectives. Truman's aims were simple: restore the sovereignty of the 38th parallel and prevent widening the war. In both cases, MacArthur failed to achieve these aims. MacArthur was a toxic follower because he publically undermined the president's constitutional authority, and sought to unite service members and civilians against the administration. His toxicity led to the breakdown of mission command and a failure of operational art. Truman did not fire MacArthur due to bad leadership practices; Truman fired him due to toxic followership.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-1–2-5.

⁸⁸ Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), I-13.

Colin L. Powell

Introduction

In October 1989, General Colin L. Powell became the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His leadership as chairman catapulted him to national fame. Politicians from both the Republican and Democratic parties began courting Powell to enter politics. In May 1992, Arkansas governor William J. Clinton won a commanding lead in the Democratic Party presidential primary race, and he began vetting potential cabinet members. Vernon Jordan, a close friend of Clinton, asked Powell if he was interested in being Clinton's running mate as the Democratic Party vice-presidential nominee. Powell declined, stating, "first of all, I don't intend to step out of uniform one day and into partisan politics the next. Second, I don't even know what I am politically. And third, George Bush picked me and stuck by me. I could never campaign against him." Two days before the general election, Jordan again solicited Powell to be senior political appointee in either the US Department of Defense or State. Once again, Powell declined. Powell's actions were that of a loyal and effective follower.⁸⁹

In November 1992, Clinton won the general election ending twelve years of Republican administrations. Powell met with Clinton for the first time on November 19, 1992. Powell acknowledged that even though he was an apolitical military leader, the public associated him with the Reagan and Bush presidencies. Powell offered to retire early if Clinton desired to put a new face on the chairmanship. Powell repeated the offer to the incoming secretary of defense, Les Aspin. Powell spent most of his career working directly for civilian leaders and understood the

⁸⁹ Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 539 (quote), 539-47; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 334-37.

nature of the relationship between the military and the government. In these roles, his assignments developed his followership skills in addition to his leadership skills.⁹⁰

Early Career, Washington Exposure, and Rise to Prominence

Early in his career, Colin Powell followed a typical path for an officer. He graduated from the City College of New York, and commissioned as an infantry officer. He served as a platoon leader, company commander, and in various staff assignments. He twice served in the Vietnam War, first as an advisor and then later as a battalion executive officer and acting division operations officer. In 1969, he attended George Washington University for two years to earn a master's degree, and then worked as a research analyst in the Pentagon. He demonstrated many attributes of being a great leader early in his career. Then, in November 1971—still only a junior lieutenant colonel—his career path changed from that of traditional officer progression when he began working for senior government officials.⁹¹

Senior military leaders in the US Army infantry branch directed Powell to apply to the White House Fellows program. Fellows work with senior leaders of the executive branch for a year. Powell applied specifically to work with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to better understand federal government finances. At OMB, Powell worked for two future Secretaries of Defense, Frank Carlucci and Caspar Weinberger. While working at OMB, he

⁹⁰ Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 539-52; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 334-37; Jeffrey J. Matthews, "Exemplary Followership," in *The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

⁹¹ "General Colin Luther Powell," General Officer Management Office, last modified September 30, 1993, accessed March 17, 2016, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx?Ltr=P&Type=Retired>; Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 23-37.

developed important bonds with both Carlucci and Weinberger—these bonds would continue to shape Powell’s career in the future.⁹²

After the fellows program, Powell’s career resumed a typical path for high performing officers, including battalion and brigade commands. Then his career took another unusual turn. Senior defense civilians selected Powell as a military assistant at the Pentagon to a couple of senior defense officials at the Pentagon including the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Previously, while at OMB, he learned important aspects of the inner workings of the federal government. In this new job, he learned the inner workings of the senior levels of the Department of Defense. He held this job during the Iranian Revolution and received a promotion to brigadier general. As a battalion and brigade commander, he developed his leadership skills. As an assistant in the Pentagon, he learned how followers fit into the military.⁹³

After short assignments at Fort Carson and Fort Leavenworth, Powell moved back to the Pentagon as the military assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger. In this job, Weinberger used Powell more like a deputy secretary than an assistant. For example, Powell had a peripheral role was the Iran-Contra Affair, working to transfer missiles to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). His limited knowledge of Iran-Contra became important later when he served on the National Security Council (NSC). In one of his most influential acts, Powell advised Weinberger on a set of political rules for the use of military force. Powell’s prototype as a military leader was as a junior officer serving in Vietnam. Like many others, he wrote that the

⁹² Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 146-73; “General Colin Luther Powell,” General Officer Management Office, last modified September 30, 1993, accessed March 17, 2016, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx?Ltr=P&Type=Retired>.

⁹³ Howard Means, *Colin Powell: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 174-96; Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 172, 219-52; “General Colin Luther Powell,” General Officer Management Office, last modified September 30, 1993, accessed March 17, 2016, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx?Ltr=P&Type=Retired>.

United States' efforts in Vietnam wasted resources and needlessly caused thousands of soldiers to die. Powell sought to avoid another Vietnam-like conflict. At the time, they labeled these rules the Weinberger Doctrine, but the media later called them the Powell Doctrine during the Bush administration. The rules were a set of six conditions the government should meet before using military force, including the conditions that use of force occurred only as a last resort, and only after the identification of clear political objectives. While advising Weinberger, he imposed his will on a superior without being insubordinate. He was a new major general, but by working directly with the Secretary of Defense, he put his valuable insight into the relationship between political and military leaders to use, and influenced national policy for use of force.⁹⁴

Referring to the Chaleff model of followership styles (figure 1), Powell used a partner style. He challenged his superiors but remained loyal to their decisions. According to the Kelley followership styles (figure 2), Powell exhibited exemplary follower behaviors. Powell provided constructive feedback to Weinberger while remaining loyal to him and the military. According to the 4-D followership model (figure 3), Powell possessed the disciple style as highlighted by Weinberger giving Powell tasks beyond the typical purview of a military assistant. Already a proven leader, Powell continued to hone his followership skills in senior military positions.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 316; Bill Adler, *The Generals: The New American Heroes* (New York: Avon Books, 1991) 88-97; Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 272-304; "General Colin Luther Powell," General Officer Management Office, last modified September 30, 1993, accessed March 17, 2016, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx?Ltr=P&Type=Retired>.

⁹⁵ Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

Powell then became a lieutenant general and assumed command of V Corps in Germany. As Powell settled into his new position, the Iran-Contra affair became a growing scandal. President Reagan appointed Frank Carlucci as the new Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, more commonly referred to as the national security advisor—with Powell as Carlucci's deputy—to fix the problems with the National Security Council (NSC) that led to the scandal. Powell proved to be a critical asset. Since he already knew about Iran-Contra, he hit the ground running as Carlucci's deputy. About a year later, Secretary of Defense Weinberger resigned unexpectedly. Reagan selected Carlucci to become secretary, and Powell became the national security advisor—a role, which he quickly reinvented. Many previous national security advisors reported only to the president. Powell adopted a method that when orchestrating the NSC, he would report to the president and statutory members (Vice-President and secretaries of State and Defense). When he served in the capacity strictly as an advisor to the President, he reported only to Reagan.⁹⁶

Powell entered this position with two key goals: decide security matters in the council, and prevent information leaks to the media. To accomplish this goal, Powell improved the efficiency of the NSC by making decisions and recommendations quickly. The NSC participants

⁹⁶ Howard Means, *Colin Powell: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 213-33; Bill Adler, *The Generals: The New American Heroes* (New York: Avon Books, 1991) 88-106; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 317-18; Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 339-87; "General Colin Luther Powell," General Officer Management Office, last modified September 30, 1993, accessed March 17, 2016, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx?Ltr=P&Type=Retired>; Thomas E. Ricks, *The Generals: American Military Command From World War II to Today* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), 369-70. Secretary of Defense Weinberger tended to recommend diplomatic solutions to foreign problems. Conversely, Secretary of State George Shultz recommended military solutions. The national security advisor and the central intelligence agency exploited this stalemate with the Iran-Contra Affair.

tend to leak information to the media when a stalemate occurs. Therefore, making the process more efficient prevented leaks to the media. This *modus operandi* worked well. As Reagan approached the end of his second presidential term, Powell's career reached another fork in the road.⁹⁷

In November 1988, President-elect George H. W. Bush built his own team in the administration—it was not going to be just a continuation of the Reagan presidency. As a result, Powell would no longer be the advisor, but Bush did offer him positions as the director of the CIA or the Deputy Secretary of State. Powell declined, remained in the Army, and became the commander of US Forces Command—one of the prerequisite positions for appointment as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Powell served as the commander for only five months before his appointment as the chairman.⁹⁸

Bush selected Powell over thirty-six more senior general officers. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf wrote that Powell was the logical choice due to his balanced military and political background. The chairman is the most senior member of the US military, but he does not command any units. The chairman serves as the principal military advisor to the president. Thus, the chairman leads the military as the most senior service member, but he also follows the

⁹⁷ Howard Means, *Colin Powell: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 213-33; Bill Adler, *The Generals: The New American Heroes* (New York: Avon Books, 1991) 88-106; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 317-18; Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 339-87; “General Colin Luther Powell,” General Officer Management Office, last modified September 30, 1993, accessed March 17, 2016, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx?Ltr=P&Type=Retired>.

⁹⁸ Howard Means, *Colin Powell: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 213-33; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 318-19; *US Code* 10 (2016), § 152. The chairman prerequisites are vice-chairman, service chief, combatant commander, or commander of a specified command. At the time, US Forces Command was a specified command.

President's orders and proffers his best military advice to guide the president's use of military force. In his new role, Powell quickly put the Powell Doctrine to the test.⁹⁹

In 1988, the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Panama began to deteriorate. In May 1989, Panama's military leader, General Manuel Noriega illegally overturned national election results, leading the United States to take a more aggressive approach to its relations with Noriega, including a build-up of forces in Panama. The diplomatic relationship continued to deteriorate through the rest of the year. In December 1989, the Panamanian National Assembly essentially declared war on the United States, and soon after in what became a significant media event, a Panamanian soldier shot three US service members. Bush determined that Noriega must go, after which the situation met all prescribed conditions in the Powell doctrine, and the US military commenced Operation Just Cause. Powell remained closely involved in the operation to synchronize tactical actions with Bush's political and diplomatic goals. By definition, Powell effectively practiced operational art. Still another challenge remained, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.¹⁰⁰

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the US government considered a broad range of military options from limited air strikes to a full-scale invasion. Powell's prototype clashed with those of Bush and then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. The president served as a naval pilot during World War II and flew numerous bombing missions. As criticism for his delay in taking

⁹⁹ Ronald H. Cole, *Operation Just Cause: The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Panama, February 1988–January 1990* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1995), 1-3; Bill Adler, *The Generals: The New American Heroes* (New York: Avon Books, 1991) 115-19; Howard Means, *Colin Powell: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 232-33; Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Pocket Books, 1991), 82-84; H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, *The Autobiography: It doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 334-35.

¹⁰⁰ Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 401-21; Bill Adler, *The Generals: The New American Heroes* (New York: Avon Books, 1991) 121-26; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 319.

action in response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iraq, Bush called for air strikes—arguing that a bombing campaign would be quick and effective. Powell, on the other hand, was a Vietnam veteran and observed that air strikes alone rarely destroyed an enemy force or caused them to surrender. Cheney, a career politician who did not serve in the military, scolded Powell whenever he questioned policy. These prototype differences caused for tense discussions, but Powell, as an effective follower, synchronized the military plan with policy. The US military deployed a large ground force in the event that air strikes did not cause Saddam Hussein to retreat from Kuwait. As Powell had predicted, Saddam did not give up even after six weeks of airstrikes, and the ground war commenced. Throughout the war, and the remainder of Bush's term as president, Powell included political risks of military action in all discussions of use of military force. Powell was both an effective leader as a general and an effective follower as a presidential advisor.¹⁰¹

Analysis and Conclusion

Powell's experiences, especially the Vietnam and Cold Wars, shaped his prototype. The Powell doctrine highlighted his belief that specific conditions must exist to employ military force, and he worked with senior civilian officials to meet these conditions. He possessed a different prototype than many political officials including Bush and Cheney, which created friction in their relationship. Despite their prototype differences, Powell worked to influence and achieve political objectives instead of working against his superiors. In the past, many other general officers had used their fame to debate policy in the media, but Powell refrained from using the media to alter policy. Many focus on Powell's success as a military leader, but he also proved to be an effective follower of his political leaders.

¹⁰¹ Colin L. Powell, and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 445-515; Thomas E. Ricks, *The Generals: American Military Command From World War II to Today* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), 371-78; Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals: An American History of Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 321-29.

Referring to the Chaleff model of followership styles (figure 1), Powell possessed a partner style. He challenged policy of his superiors but remained loyal to their decisions. According to the Kelley followership styles (figure 2), Powell exhibited exemplary follower behaviors. Powell took initiative, provided constructive feedback to superiors, and remained loyal to the military and government. According to the 4-D followership model (figure 3), Powell fell into the disciple style. Powell was productive in all his positions. While in the military, he declined several offers to serve as a high-ranking civilian in the administration. Powell was both a superb leader and follower.¹⁰²

Throughout Powell's career, he developed his followership attributes along with his leadership skills. Beginning with his participation as a White House Fellow, he served in numerous positions where he observed and participated in the politics. He spent most of his time as a general officer serving as an assistant, deputy, or advisor to a civilian official. When Powell served as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he proposed options that he believed would both achieve political objectives and prove tactically sound. Powell became popular among the American people and developed significant political influence, but he did not make public statements that used his popularity to subvert national policy. Ultimately, Powell was a good general because he was both a good leader and an effective follower.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 75; Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 97; Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008), 144.

¹⁰³ Jeffrey J. Matthews, "Exemplary Followership: Colin L. Powell," in *The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

Cross-Case Analysis

The leaders analyzed in the case studies that developed into toxic followers did so through a cyclical process. Conflicting prototypes, while a root cause, do not provide a sufficient explanation for their toxicity. Conflicting prototypes created friction between leaders and followers and established conditions that could contribute to toxic followership. Moments of crisis, such as a disagreement over military strategy and policy, resulted in toxic followership in three of four cases, as opposed to reliance on appropriate means of reconciliation. The effective follower provided constructive feedback while remaining supportive to political leaders, engaging in dialogue to reach agreement through compromise. The toxic followers' reticence led them to form alliances with the political opposition, while publically criticizing both their leader and the government. The effective follower facilitated unity between the government and the military whereas the toxic follower created a rift between the administration and the military leading to unnecessary and destructive political tension.

Many aspects of the crisis situations that can lead to follower toxicity occur outside of the follower's control, such as the government's decision to declare war. While this leaves followers unable to control some toxicity variables, they retain the ability to influence two particularly important variables: their own personal and professional development, and their decisions whether to employ toxic behavior or not. Military leaders who perform well earn promotions, awards, and additional opportunities to advance. As they rise in rank, these leaders continue to engage in the behaviors that led to their earlier promotions through an amplifying process of reinforcement. For example, a leader that receives a battlefield promotion for gallantry after defying orders tends to demonstrate more defiance and gallantry in later engagements—that leader has come to see defiance and gallantry as the solution for most problems. In this way, the follower's own actions merge over time with the other aspects of their prototype.

Decisions to engage in toxic behavior also follow this cyclical process of amplification. A follower leaning towards toxicity initially tends to do so through relatively insignificant choices in behavior, such as challenging a leader publically over a minor disagreement. While challenging one's leader can contribute to healthy discourse that will improve decisions, toxic followers take such behavior too far. Once the follower crosses the line from respectful discourse to public debate, particularly when continuing the debate after the leader has made a decision, the follower transitions to toxicity. This represents a critical point of bifurcation because the follower had an opportunity to back away from the disagreement, suffering only a minor setback in the leader-follower relationship. However, once the first foray into toxic behavior takes place, such followers will usually continue to challenge their superiors publically, perpetuating a cycle of ever-worsening toxicity.

The case studies above consistently illustrate these cyclical tendencies. All three toxic leaders developed negative characteristics and merged them into their prototype over time, engaging in increasingly confrontational behavior with their leaders as a result. Only Colin Powell avoided these behaviors, choosing instead to build on positive aspects of his character development and find ways to deal with disagreement through respectful discourse and influence rather than confrontation.

In social categorization theory, individuals develop their prototype as an aggregate of their life experiences. Two individuals who possess similar prototypes will likely develop an amicable relationship with each other. Conversely, individuals with conflicting prototypes often develop a tense relationship. When people interact, they tend to form impromptu assessments based subconsciously on their individual prototypes rather than an objective evaluation of the situation. In human information processing, individuals store their collective experiences in their long-term memory, which produces their prototype. Short-term iconic and conceptual memories filter information, in which individuals form opinions within three to five hundred milliseconds

based subconsciously on this information, perceived through the lens of their prototype. When individuals interact, those who already have a tense relationship and conflicting prototypes tend to disagree instantly, further amplifying the stress between them. In all four case studies, the military leaders possessed different prototypes than their superiors, which established conditions for the generals to develop behavior characteristic of toxic followers.¹⁰⁴

Of the individuals interacting in the historical cases above, each career military leader's prototype consisted predominately of military experiences and decisions based on achieving tactical victory. Conversely, each political leader's prototype consisted of a variety of experiences including limited military duty, a civilian career path, and multiple political positions. Additionally, political leaders balanced multiple military, civilian, and political considerations to determine policy. They understood that the best tactical action may lack political viability. The presidents in all four case studies faced severe criticism from political opponents and the public. This led to stressed relationships with their military subordinates which, combined with prototype differences and individual subconscious assessments, presented the opportunity for followers to become toxic—but the follower ultimately retained the ability to choose based largely on their followership style.

Leadership experts Ira Chaleff, Robert Kelley, and Roger Adair presented multiple methods to evaluate individual followership styles (figures 1-3). The more effective followership styles include those in which followers constructively criticize their boss while remaining loyal to their superiors and the organization. The less effective followership styles lead to unproductive behavior, criticism of superiors while withholding support, and disruption of organizational goals. Effective followers continually develop their leadership and followership attributes, while toxic

¹⁰⁴ Michael A. Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007); Robert G. Lord, and Karen J. Maher, *Leadership and Information Processing: Linking Perceptions and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 13-26.

followers stagnate or further descend into destructive behaviors. In the case studies, followers became toxic when a crisis exposed this developmental gap, and the follower acted based on an instantaneous prototypical assessment rather than an objective evaluation of the entire situation.¹⁰⁵

Once followers became toxic, they became increasingly secretive and deceptive with their leadership. In early stages of toxicity, followers became vague and communicated less frequently with their political leaders, causing them to rely on assumptions for additional details to fill informational gaps. Over time these toxic followers often fabricated erroneous reports, further misleading politicians. Political leaders' understanding of the situation suffered as a result, leading them to lose trust in their military subordinates. Political leaders also collected information covertly on their subordinates as their awareness of the military situation degenerated. As the leader-follower communication breakdown occurred, the toxic followers undermined their superiors through public means. Once the toxic follower challenged the leader publically, the relationship reached a point of no return, from which the follower could not regain effectiveness as either a leader or follower. As the toxicity reached its peak, followers communicated with their superior's political opponents in an attempt to sway political decisions. Ironically, the followers' public criticism merely led their political leaders to entrench more deeply against their influence. Over time, multiple crises compounded the effects of toxic followership, perpetuating the followers' downward spiral. This cycle culminated with the leader firing the toxic follower, finally putting an end to the relationship, and the disjointed military effort that it had created.

¹⁰⁵ Ira Chaleff, "Creating New Ways of Following," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008); Robert E. Kelley, "Identifying Your Followership Style," in *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992); Rodger Adair, "Developing Great Leaders, One Follower at a Time," in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008).

The three toxic followers progressed with similar patterns of toxicity. Before commanding the Army of the Potomac, George McClellan had established a reputation as a proven combat veteran and organizational manager. McClellan, a war Democrat, came from an affluent, white-collar family whereas Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, made his way as a self-taught blue-collar lawyer. McClellan advocated for prolonged siege warfare to limit casualties and destruction. Lincoln demanded immediate offensive action to end the war quickly. In staunch disagreement, McClellan became reticent and engaged in political jockeying in direct political opposition to Lincoln. McClellan withheld his tactical plan while publically purporting Lincoln's alleged lack of support to McClellan's army. Their prototype differences led to relationship friction. In the face of several crises, McClellan—having failed to develop desirable followership attributes—became toxic. Lincoln fired McClellan because of his inability to follow and his continued public display of disdain for the president. On the opposite side of the battlefield, the more tactically savvy Joseph E. Johnston experienced a similar downfall.¹⁰⁶

Johnston epitomized the ideal patriot and combat leader, from with his infatuation with the revolutionary war as a young boy through a military career spanning four wars. He demonstrated gallantry numerous times as indicated by his four battlefield promotions and several combat wounds. He developed the prototype and reputation of a capable military general. Conversely, Jefferson Davis dabbled in multiple ventures including military service, plantation ownership, and politics. As a politician, he served in both the executive and legislative branches.

¹⁰⁶ Michael A. Hogg, "Social Psychology of Leadership," in *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007); H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 1-5, 12-13; Stephen R. Taaffe, *Commanding the Army of the Potomac* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006) 6-7; John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and His General* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 5-11, 2-25.

This prototype difference led to a strained relationship between the two men early in the Civil War. Johnston developed the qualities of a solid leader, but he did not develop attributes of effective followership. Johnston became increasingly frustrated with perceived political interference in military operations; meanwhile, Davis lost all trust in Johnston. By the end of the war, Johnston's experience and tactical logic became irrelevant as his toxicity and poor relationship with his president overshadowed his sound military advice.¹⁰⁷

Douglas MacArthur emerged from WWII as one of America's most effective and popular generals. Stories his father told him, in conjunction with his own successes and the popular fanfare that they created reinforced his belief that insubordination was acceptable. He thought the United States should always have a sizeable force to encounter any threat. He took pride in his ability to manipulate politicians and policy to suite his strategic views. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, however, fell into a different prototype. They faced competing problems including the Great Depression, European reconstruction, other domestic problems, and the Cold War. As the Chief of Staff of the US Army, MacArthur was curt with Roosevelt, but their disagreements generally remained behind closed doors. As the military governor of the Philippines, MacArthur became taciturn and submitted false reports. Through World War II, his abundant success reinforced his life-long military aggression. During the Korean War, MacArthur violated orders, submitted false reports, ascribed military successes to his genius, and attributed failures to lack of support from Truman. Roosevelt and Truman were career politicians who understood the relationship between the military and the government, but MacArthur did not understand this relationship. Truman ultimately relieved MacArthur because he would not conduct military operations in accordance with explicit US policy. Like McClellan and Johnston

¹⁰⁷ Curt Anders, "Joseph E. Johnston: A Professional's Professional," in *Fighting Confederates* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968).

before him, MacArthur ultimately failed as a military leader because of a self-destructive cycle of toxic followership.¹⁰⁸

The three toxic followers traveled similar paths in the cycle to toxicity, but Colin Powell provides an example of a general who served as an effective follower, even though he faced similar circumstances that contributed to the downfall of the toxic leaders in the other case studies. Like the other generals, Powell's prototype differed from that of his superiors. Powell disagreed vehemently with his political leaders regarding many policies, but he only vocalized his disagreement in private discourse. The case studies indicate that he managed this because, unlike the toxic followers, he developed followership attributes that matched the quality of his leadership skills. As a White House Fellow, he served in numerous positions in which he observed and participated in the politics. He spent most of his time as a general officer serving as an assistant, deputy, or advisor to a civilian official. When Powell served as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he proposed tactically sound options that achieved political aims. Powell became popular among the American people and developed significant political influence, but he did not make public statements that used his popularity to subvert national policy. Ultimately, Powell achieved success because he developed the traits of both a good leader and an effective follower.¹⁰⁹

The four case studies highlight the fact that followership toxicity emerges as toxic tendencies that develop over time, rather than in a single event. Individuals who nurtured their

¹⁰⁸ Richard Lowitt, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1967); Frank Freidel and Hugh Sidey, "Harry S. Truman," The White House, accessed December 18, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/harrystruman>; Frank Freidel and Hugh Sidey, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," The White House, accessed December 18, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/franklindroosevelt>.

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey J. Matthews, "Exemplary Followership: Colin L. Powell," in *The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

leadership styles but neglected their followership attributes eventually suffered from a tragic downfall. They fell victim to the Icarus Paradox—they flew too close to the sun. When their perceived infallibility combined with their stressed relationship with superiors, they made decisions that revealed selfishly toxic behavior. In all four cases, the political leaders appointed these generals to key positions based on their perceived ability to lead soldiers. The generals that failed did so not because of their inability to lead, but because they chose not to follow.

Conclusion

Since the Civil War, the role of followers in decision-making has become increasingly important contributing to the commander decisions. Leaders and followers are two sides of the same coin. The US society tends to emphasize leadership development throughout a person's career with the underlying assumption that individuals already developed followership attributes. Over time, individuals amplify their strengths to gain increasing successes. The charismatic and courageous leader uses these traits to achieve results. The case studies, however, underscore the importance of followership development in that capable leaders may not accomplish their mission if they lack the ability to follow. A skilled commander may radiate exceptional leadership qualities, but they may ultimately fail if that commander did not strive to develop desirable followership qualities. The toxic follower ultimately loses effectiveness as a leader, not only falling into a pattern of toxic followership but also losing the ability to arrange tactical action to achieve strategic and political aims. The toxic follower fails to practice operational art.

Many civilian organizations embrace the importance of followership roles through methods such as flattened organizational structures and increased subordinate influence in the governance of their organization. To a point, the US military addressed the importance of the follower with tools such as 360-degree surveys and leader symposiums. These tools contribute to the senior leader understanding of leader-follower interactions throughout the organization, but these forums only provide feedback to senior leaders and do not address followership

development. As an opportunity to vent frustrations on their leaders, anonymous surveys may actually enable toxic followership if soldiers express scathing and unconstructive feedback. These tools inform leaders and are beneficial to the military, but they do little to develop subordinates. These techniques focus on leaders, not followers, often providing feedback to followers only after they have fallen into an unbreakable pattern of toxicity.

Social media has emerged as an important tool that the military uses to communicate with service members, their families, and civilians. In recent years, increasing numbers of military personnel used social media to express their disdain for superiors, from their immediate supervisor to the president. Freedom of speech, while an important right of the first amendment to the US Constitution, can also encourage military personnel to voice public opinions in social media that undermines the chain of command—engaging in a form of toxic followership. A century ago, limited access to public forums such as newspapers dampened the dynamics that could lead to toxic followership. In the information age, anyone can instantaneously become a toxic follower by posting comments to discussion boards without regard to the potential consequences. With increased opportunities to exhibit toxic behavior, service members need to understand the roles of both leaders and followers to prevent unnecessary public criticism and keep the discourse professional.

Follower development, like leader development, is a life-long venture. Developing job-related skills does not equate to follower development—followership is a state of being. The US Army could benefit from efforts to balance follower and leader development throughout the three developmental domains—institutional, operational, and self-development. In the institutional domain, the army could incorporate additional followership development instruction in the curriculum of all levels of professional military education. In the operational domain, career managers already advocate intermixing operational positions with broadening assignments. These broadening assignments are also deepening assignments where leaders can develop their

followership style. Broadening assignments offer the opportunity for soldiers at all levels to improve their understanding of the position they hold and its relationship within the larger army. Thus, broadening assignments also serve as operational development opportunities. In self-development, prescribing a variety of follower development opportunities will provide individuals opportunities to understand their role as both a leader and a follower. The key to developing followers in the institution is to avoid the follower mistakes of McClellan, Johnston, and MacArthur and to capitalize on successes of followers like Powell.

The case studies focused on the relationship between senior generals and political leaders, but analyzing followership toxicity throughout the organization would provide a more thorough understanding of toxicity. This leaves open potential areas for further research into followership toxicity throughout all levels of the military, actions to prevent the descent of individuals down the slippery slope to toxic followership, and residual effects of toxic followers on the organization. The followership toxicity portrayed above culminated with the political leader relieving the follower. Analysis of preventive and reactionary methods to followership toxicity would assist leaders in developing methods to identify and assist at-risk followers before they reach the point of no return, so the problem does not develop into a crisis that requires dismissal the follower. Additional study should also examine the residual effect of toxic followership. For example, toxic followers may create rifts inside their own organizations, causing stressed relationship with superiors, subordinates, and peers alike.

In a society that romanticizes leadership, implementing deliberate followership development will present unique challenges—particularly in the US Army, given its deep investment in leader development. Creating awareness of the equal importance of followership in the growth and success of the US Army's personnel remains, however, a critical step in developing effective followers. Many cultural habits—such as referring to lieutenants as the private of the officer corps—establish a subconscious tendency to accept followership toxicity in

army organizations. These phrases may seem innocent, but over time they take root in leaders' long-term memory and contribute to their prototype. The case studies highlight toxic relationships between senior military and political leaders, but they do not explore followership at lower levels. Further analysis of social psychology throughout all levels of the military will provide a more complete understanding of the relationship between military leaders and followers. Ultimately this should enable followers with prototypical differences to avoid developing traits of followership toxicity.

Appendix 1: Kelley Followership Questionnaire

Robert Kelley listed twenty questions to help determine an individual's followership style. When answering the survey, people rate themselves on a scale of zero to six indicating the degree to which they meet the conditions described in the question. A response of zero indicates an answer of "rarely" while a six equates to "usually." The questions fall into one of two categories: independent thinking (questions 1, 5, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20) or active engagement (the remaining questions). Upon completion of the questionnaire, individuals calculate their total scores by category, and then plot the data point on the leadership styles graph.¹¹⁰

1. "Does your work help you fulfill some societal goal or personal dream that is important to you?"
2. Are your personal work goals aligned with the organization's priority goals?
3. Are you highly committed to and energized by your work and organization, giving them your best ideas and performance?
4. Does your enthusiasm also spread to and energize your co-workers?
5. Instead of waiting for or merely accepting what the leader tells you, do you personally identify which organizational activities are most critical for achieving the organization's priority goals?
6. Do you actively develop a distinctive competence in those critical activities so that you become more valuable to the leader and the organization?
7. When starting a new job or assignment, do you promptly build a record of successes in tasks that are important to the leader?
8. Can the leader give you a difficult assignment without the benefit of much supervision, knowing that you will meet your deadline with highest-quality work and that you will "fill in the crack" if need be?
9. Do you take the initiative to seek out and successfully complete assignments that go above and beyond your job?
10. When you are not the leader of a group project, do you still contribute at a high level, often doing more than your share?
11. Do you independently think up and champion new ideas that will contribute significantly to the leader's or the organization's goals?
12. Do you try to solve the tough problems (technical or organizational), rather than look to the leader to do it for you?
13. Do you help out other co-workers, making them look good, even when you don't get any credit?
14. Do you help the leader or group see both the upside potential and downside risks of ideas or plans, playing the devil's advocate if need be?

¹¹⁰Robert E. Kelley, "Identifying your Followership Style" in *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 87-95.

15. Do you understand the leader's needs, goals, and constraints, and work hard to help meet them?
16. Do you actively and honestly own up to your strengths and weaknesses rather than put off evaluation?
17. Do you make a habit of internally questioning the wisdom of the leader's decision rather than just doing what you are told?
18. When the leader asks you to do something that runs contrary to your professional or personal preferences, do you say "no" rather than "yes"?
19. Do you act on your own ethical standards rather than the leader's or the group's standards?
20. Do you assert your views on important issues, even though it might mean conflict with your group or reprisals from the leader?"¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Robert E. Kelley, *The Power of Followership*, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 90-92. Copyright © 1989 - 2015 by Robert E. Kelley. All rights reserved. Cannot be used without express written permission.

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